RELIGION
in the light of
SCIENCES

JACQUES DE MARQUETTE

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY-7

ABOUT THE BOOK

A life-long study of philosophy, including the philosophy of sciences, and teaching of comparative religion in the East and the West, supplemented by extensive visits to the centres of higher spiritual learning in India, Japan, China and Indo-China, have convinced Dr. Jacques de Marquette that the scientific cosmo-conception at the turn of this century, on which Western philosophical criticism was founded, had become obsolete even under its Einsteinian form.

This essay is an attempt to indicate the new vistas opened by scientific progress in the last fifty years, and how they can serve as touchstones for the validity of religious interpretations of man's nature and destiny, and provide the basis for a new approach to religious and ethical striving.

Special stress is laid on the corroboration of some fundamental Hindu and Buddhist tenets by the latest developments of astronomy and cosmo-physics.

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Acc. No. 2939 (D)
Dated 3/2/2016

1963
BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN
CHOWPATTY : BOMBAY 7

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First Edition, December 1963

Price : Rs. 5/-, Sh. 9, $ 2.20

Rupee Price outside India Rs. 6

PRINTED IN INDIA

By B. G. Dhawale at the Karnatak Printing Press, Karnatak House, Chira Bazar, Bombay 2, and published by S. Ramakrishnan, Executive Secretary, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 7.

Dedicated to the memory of

Dr. R. D. RANADE

in Loving Gratitude

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CONTENTS

Chap.		Page
	Introduction	1
I	The Religious Problem	6
II	The Touchstone of Hinduism	20
III	Ethical Revolution of Galactic Era	38
IV	From Psychology to Cosmophysics	53
V	From Cosmophysics to Psychology	68
VI	Purification for Communion	88
VII	Flights to Apotheosis	99

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INTRODUCTION

The moment we are capable of freeing ourselves from the passionate reflex reactions of adolescence to the challenges of life, we discover that 'the' problem of problems is that of adapting satisfactorily our behaviour to the carrying out of the part assigned to us by our participation in the life of mankind on our Earth.

Until the end of the XVIII Century, this all important harmonization was more or less forcibly induced by religions whose guidance was practically universally unchallenged.

Nowadays the old 'Consensus Commune', by which all men felt themselves firmly rooted and wholly integrated in a homogeneous social order, has lost its hold on people and each individual has more or less to 'map out' for himself the course of his 'struggle for life', through the debris of the collective idols of the past.

This small essay is an attempt by an old wayfarer, after a lifetime of striving through over forty countries and five great civilisations to cleanse the glasses through which he was looking at Life, trying to steer his course through to righteousness and, possibly, to happiness. He was one of the earliest leaders of the New Youth Movement in France before the first World War, having been associated with the revolt of Youth since 1905 when he abandoned the bourgeois way of life of his ancestors. So he hopes his appraisal of spiritual values will seem fairly congenial to the New Generation.

One of the privileges of independent youth is that it is apt to espouse with great fervour the first cosmo-conception to which it arrives on its graduating from adolescence. After having had for years at college, to accept things on our teachers' recommendations, we feel so happy to have achieved a synthetic view of our own concoction, that we are prone to think, according to the usual claim of prophets, that it has put 'the seal of finality' on the formulation of truth. We thus tend to join those blind fanatics whom the wise men of the past had learned to fear. 'Timeo hominum unius libris'.

Happy are we, if our first access to a systematization of our cosmo-conception is through the portal of a wide and liberal school of thought. It was my good luck, that after having gone through deep misgivings about the ethical—or rather unethical—foundations of the Bible, due to the shockingly unjustified privileges granted by the Creator of the universe to his chosen people, which launched me into a painful agnosticism when I turned fourteen, I became interested in Hinduism at eighteen, joined the Theosophical Society at twenty in 1908, about the time when Mrs. Besant became its President. For twenty years, I thought I had reached a final understanding of the universe. The world to which I was introduced by my theosophical studies with their impartial and respectful recognition of the sublime aspects of all religions, seemed so intrinsically well grounded on Harmony and Justice, that for me it met all queries and solved all problems.

Yet, four factors drove me out of the comfortable security of this harmonious paradise.

The first were various spiritual experiences which made me realize the impossibility of giving a coherent account of man's relationship with the 'many mansions in the Father's House', in terms at the same time conforming with religious revelation and rationally acceptable, hence the relative value of all religious 'writs'.

The second was the completion of philosophical studies in the Old Sorbonne, which introduced me to one of the most precious gifts of philosophy : the art of discovering problems dormant under the seemingly perfect pictures of the beautiful flower-beds of accepted beliefs and pleasant theories.

The third was the meeting of an intellectual superman, Dr. A. D. Coomaraswamy who, after hearing the course of lectures I gave at the Lowell Institute of Boston on 'An Introduction to Comparative Mysticisms', invited me to stay in his home. There, under the aegis of Dona Luisa, his talented wife, our acquaintance ripened into a friendship which was most soul-enriching for me. This meeting had a momentous effect. Coomaraswamy possessed a very remarkable combination of three priceless gifts : an amazingly comprehensive intelligence, a deep spiritual intuition, and a prodigious memory which made of him in our modern world one of the geniuses of the Renaissance able to discourse on 'omni rescibili'. He greatly helped my dubious mind to solve many taunting problems and eliminate the chaff from the doctrines of so-called occult sciences.

A further and all-penetrating influence was the meeting of a real Mahatma, Professor Dr. Ranade, the Vice Chancellor of the Allahabad University, probably the foremost Gnana Yogi of our age. He accepted me as a disciple in 1955. The guidance of this great Gurudev, who had been a spiritual adviser to Gandhiji and other prominent lights of India, by helping me to adjust my mental processes to the interpretation of the inner transmutations called forth by spiritual experiences, enabled me to organise my efforts to appreciate the 'data' of mystical relationships with the world of 'intermedia'; between the Fount-head of the Universe and its many diversified expressions.

These influences greatly helped me to meet the tremendous challenge which came to me a few years ago, when I realized that recent scientific discoveries had so completely changed the aspect of our universe, that it had become incompatible not only with the current interpretations of most of the religious revelations, but also with many of the so-called 'traditional' occult and esoteric doctrines! Taking religion to be the supreme factor in man's life, I felt called to an all out effort to try to conciliate religious practices, to which I had been addicted all my life, with the 'hard fact' of the all penetrating magnetico-kinetic reality described by science under the many appearances outlined, and really formed, by our sensory activities. I realised, these actually lured me from an adequate grasp of reality. And 'reality' or Truth seems to be the one essential factor or common denominator back of the three attributes which Christ ascribed to Himself when He said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life".

Without this essential compatibility with "Reality", under all of its aspects, any religion is doomed to remain a 'verba flatus vocis' according to the scholastics, an empty discourse.

However, in accordance with the incredible complication of cosmic facts, all religious revelations are not equally remote from reality. A well known agnostic scientist, Professor Dauvillier, from the celebrated "College de France", declares that although the new picture of the universe does not bear out the Judeo-Christian revelation, it is compatible with Indo-Buddhist doctrines and those of the old Greek metaphysicians.

The following essay aims at pointing out some of the connections between the ancient Greco-Indian traditions and the data of modern science. It also seeks to indicate how these can be adapted to the requirements of the souls striving to be 'in tune with the Infinite', the Ultimate Truth and its Righteousness. Moreover, an attempt is made to help these souls to discriminate in their religious fervour, between the two respective influences of the Spiritual Essence of the Universe in the core of our soul, Who, according to Augustine, has sought and loved us before we sought and loved Him; and the pressure of social dynamisms, resulting from the accumulation of human thought during the development of our own religion, in its various centers, which exercised and still does exercise a coercive influence on the formation and formulation of our beliefs in their inner perception as well as in their outer expressions. And owing to our protracted and intimate visits in most of the religious centres of the West and the East, we have been enabled to realise that this famous 'pressure of social factors' on the minds of men, described by sociologists, can be quite as coercive and therefore blinding among Eastern religious communities, notwithstanding the highly philosophical and metaphysical 'warp and woof' of their 'Holy Writs', as it is in the case of the pressure exercised on their faithful by the more popularly inspired confessions of the West.

Yet we feel the most important result of this free attempt to appraise the traditional assets of mankind is that, whilst many 'time honoured' dogmas cannot survive a searching confrontation with the new cosmo-conception emerging from the rising tide of scientific research, our right to feel intimately connected with the all-essential and all-pervading Reality of the cosmos remains unshaken.

At the end of the XIXth Century, religious writers used to say that if a little Science took man away from God, much Science brought him back to a worshipful reverence for the Creator. This statement remains true, but special emphasis has to be laid on the fact that the God to whom modern Science has brought back scientists of the calibre of Einstein, is that of impersonal Pantheism and has practically nothing in common with the various anthropomorphic and personalised idols created by our pious but ignorant forbears, completely deluded by the vain appearances created by man's deceptive sensory organs. We shall attempt to show what remains of current ideas on religious problems, when approached in a spirit of deep reverence for Truth in all its implications.

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CHAPTER I

THE RELIGIOUS PROBLEM

Magister dixit — The Master said so :

Religion occupies such a place in man's life that Aristotle already saw in it the outstanding feature of our species "Anthropos Zoon Metaphysicon" (Man is a metaphysical animal). This universal presence of religious inspiration in human life has been confirmed by a Surate of the Coran, which provides a magnificent foundation for a truly universal oecumenism. "There is no nation which did not receive (from God) its Prophet".

From all sides, first class thinkers claim that the present world crisis with its unleashing of the grossest passions in the individual, social and international worlds, is caused by the growing chasm between the respective progresses of the ethical faculties, which should enable man to control his passions and the development of the technical means he can use to gratify these. In one word, there is a constantly widening breach between technical power and the sovereignty of ethical laws. Everywhere, clergies are earnestly striving to restore to their traditional teachings their former influence on the nations, attributing present moral decay to their waning spiritual fervour.

Against the Letter :

The World Spiritual Council repudiates any intention to formulate a syncretism between religious doctrines, so as to elaborate a truly interconfessional oecumenism, including all legitimate religions and not only the separated fractions of Christianity. This would be a futile undertaking since all clergies cling with an especially strong and passionate attachment to the written words of their particular confessions, which they all hold to be the only really revealed one. Such an endeavour would be also in direct contradiction with the aims of our Association. Its very name indicates that its purpose is to promote in the religious life of nations and individuals, the pre-eminence of the Spirit which "Quickeneth" according to Jesus, whilst the Letter "killeth". It is really difficult not to see that when speaking of the "Letter" which killeth, He meant the texts upon which the religious Jews of His time were exercising their understanding and discriminations, that is, their Holy Thora on which the Holy Writs of Christians and Moslems are based.

Literal and Numerological Symbolism :

This condemnation of attachment to the "Letter" referred to a widespread practice among the Jews of His time ever since the return from Babylon. This city was a great centre of culture where all the faiths and philosophies of the civilisations of the time met and consorted. With their keen intellect and love for ideas, the Israelites rapidly absorbed the essence of foreign religions. One of the proposed etymologies of Pharisee is indeed Pheroshim : 'translator'. This was the starting point of a new epoch in the Jewish religious thought based on a renovated cosmo-conception brought back from Babylon by the Israelites after their liberation by Cyrus. Its salient new points were, on the one hand, Angelology with its basic concept of a septenary hierarchic organisation of the invisible realms linking Jehova's throne and the Earth, on the other hand, various techniques for the interpretations of the symbolical values attributed to the numerological correspondences ascribed to the elements of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and their groupings into words and sentences. There was even the possibility of treating the parts of a sentence as kinds of algebraical equations whose magical power could be changed by replacing some of their literal elements by numerological equivalents which however gave a new potential value to the new grouping of letters.

Jerusalem at the time of Jesus :

The destruction of the Temple put an end to the possibility for the Jews to reach the Eternal through the sacrifices which could only be performed before the Holy of Holies in the Temple by the priestly caste of the Cohanim. The study of the mystical value attached to the various elements of the letters of the Thora, whose understanding remained the only connecting link with God, received so much attention in Jerusalem that it caused fierce discussions among the pious Israelites. While the Jews who returned from Babylon were using the methods of interpretation which they had received from the Chaldean and Persian Magi, the Jews coming from their very important settlement in Alexandria, then together with Antioch the greatest cultural centre in the Western World, had established in Jerusalem a learned institute which, spreading the Pythagorean numerical symbolism of the Greek philosophers, competed with the teachings of the Rabbi following the Mesopotamian influences. This historical competition between the various methods of interpretation gives its full meaning to the condemnation of the excessive interest in the letter which could develop in dangerous magical practices, instead of a humble fidelity and obedience to the cult in Truth and Spirit of Him, whose name is so holy that It is not to be pronounced.

This condemnation of the letter by Jesus received its immense importance from the fact that it included the rejection of all definite forms in general. Essentially directed against the letter of the Thora, of the Mishna and of the Talmud, it had a tremendously revolutionary importance for all Israelites, for whom, after the destruction of the Temple and of the Arch of the Holy of Holies, the "Book" remained the only connecting link with God.

The Great Religions :

Many Christians, who think that all scriptures not founded on Jewish revelation are void of any spiritual inspiration, will not find it difficult to reject these in 'toto'. But after the great progresses of our understanding and appreciation of the superb spiritual values engendered by many great souls in non-Christian religions, the World Spiritual Council solemnly protests against all claims made by any religion to be the exclusive representative of spiritual reality and values on our Planet. The much publicised attempts striving nowadays to establish an oecumenic community of religions are only concerned with the various Christian confessions. These hardly gather more than a third of the religious devotees on our planet, according to official statistics which we have to accept at their face value, in the absence of means to ascertain the spiritual value of the inner life of individual members of various confessions. These statistics indicate approximately 900 million Christians, 900 million Buddhists, 450 million Hindus and as many Moslems, taking only into account the most numerous world-wide religions. Having had the privilege of living in close contact with lay devotees as well as with ministers of these great religions, I am in a position to declare that although some very noble and most spiritually advanced souls are to be found in all of them, yet, even in the case of the most liberal religions, nearly all these advanced souls consider their own communion as being vastly superior, whereas for less well endowed souls, their particular creed is the only one which is divinely inspired, all others being bereft of any spiritual value. However, most of the great religions join in condemning the cult of the letter even in their own tradition. Judaism, although allowing every Israelite the most complete freedom in his interpretation of the Word of God, who is his personal ally, warns the Jew against a superficial interpretation of the scriptures and urges him to find their hidden meaning. Hinduism sharply discriminates between the two complementary, though radically different parts of creation: Rupam, the world of concrete objective forms, fundamentally illusory, and Arupam, formless world of ontological paradigms, emanating from the Spirit, which is One, unlimited, and thus completely formless. Buddhism, which inherited India's metaphysical cosmogony, also enjoins detachment from any sort of form and appearance, one of the connotations of Nibbana being: absence of any modality (or medium) of expression. Islam teaches that God, the only Reality, has 100 names, 99 of which refer to illusory attributes, while the only real one can neither be written nor pronounced. We shall not carry any further our analysis of the condemnation of attachment to forms amongst which the proscription by Moses of all attempts to reproduce God under any form whatsoever, has become the most famous in the West. It is closely related in its essence, to the opposition of Santa Teresa of Avila and Saint John of the Cross to the tendency among even genuine mystics to indulge in descriptive visions of formal objects. Thus, while most religious traditions condemn other religions, many ecclesiastics look upon even the experiences of their own mystics as dubious and to be held in suspicion by orthodox devotees. We ourselves consider pure i.e. non-figurative mystical experiences, as having a real value in themselves, while the literal interpretations attributed to them by the clergies of various churches seem to us to have only a passing value conditioned by the temporary understanding of the human groups in which they were developed.

The Sacred Tripod:

Intuition of a Transcendence. This brings us to the three main factors we feel able to distinguish among the modalities and forms assumed by religions. The first and foremost is that it seems to be a fact that among the fundamental constituents of their Minds, human beings, everywhere and at all times, have had a craving for a transcendent element in the Universe. They feel a sort of yearning for invisible entities of a higher nature, whose presence is sensed back of, or through, the mundane objects perceived by the senses, and who are felt to constitute a sort of supernatural realm above the world of our practical activity, and akin to the world of Numens of Kant above the world of phenomena. This intuition of a supernature, inspired the famous lines of the French poet: "Limited in his nature, infinite in his dreams, Man is a fallen God, who remembers Heavens", from which he receives a dim but powerful call like that of the homing pigeon for his nest, to use an image of the American philosopher Josiah Royce.

Universality of Mysticism:

The practical influence of this perception of the existence of a world of causes over and above material objects, has been universally reinforced by the experiences of numerous mystics. Everywhere and always, souls have had magnificent and tremendous experiences, revealing, or rather 'unveiling', the existence behind the veil of things, of transcendent forces, of blinding lights, and an undescribable power of an eminently convincing reality, although it remained ineffable; but leaving with the happy 'enlightened' one, the unshakeable certainty he had entered the sphere of a transcendent realm. Compared with this, all social and material factors lost any real importance. The Coran explicitly expresses this feeling in saying that: "All Prophets were sent by God". One can reverse this sentence in saying that any religion which efficiently brings man to put into practice, in his life, the admirable teachings of Zoroaster: "Pure thoughts, pure words, pure deeds", hails from the only Source of Good, Justice and Reality.

According to the Latin proverb "Ignoti nulla cupido" (unknown things are not desired), sociologists who never had spiritual experiences, attribute the universality of religious sentiments to the instinctive fear of the primitives before the terrifying forces of nature: thunder, lightning, floods, earthquakes, etc. . . But all those who had spiritual experiences, have known the apparently unexpected or sudden manner in which these often happen, and have gone through the fundamental upheaval they brought about in their mental make up, are convinced that they are one of the mightiest causes of the origin and persistence of religions all through the course of history. Moreover, this universal intuition of the existence of superior and mysterious powers at work in and through the physical universe, seems to be confirmed by human experience in this world and the next.

Power of Prayer :

Human thought, when it is clear, precise and strong, appears to be capable, not only of directing action, but also of bringing about new developments in the course of the universal becoming, both in human organisms and in social surroundings and even in the relations of man with the Universe. Supporting their claims with many examples, all religions extol the prodigious influence of their prayers, some of whose effects seem really miraculous. At any rate, if agnostics refuse to see anything more than chance coincidences in all the healings and successes obtained after intense prayers, the majority of people everywhere cling to their belief in the power of their prayers to bring about divine interventions in terrestrial affairs.

Since the middle of the XIX Century, the attitude of thinking people regarding what might be called "The Miracle Problem" has undergone a complete transformation. First between 1850 and 1880 the spread of spiritualism brought out, amongst a terrific jumble of groping fumblings and weird experiences, a considerable number of proofs of the existence, beyond the world of ordinary experiences, of the souls of deceased persons, or at least, of their psychological residues. Moreover, these invisible remnants of human dead seemed capable of communicating with the living. Of course, these demonstrations of the reality of some facts which either had been denied or condemned by religions, were used by many charlatans or half witted zealots, to justify all sorts of queer if not insane opinions. But the factual confirmation of the post mortem survival of some aspects of human consciousness remained an established fact, apart from the many more or less well-established deductions drawn from it. Later in the eighties, the psychiatrists from the Nancy School and their disciples from the schools of Vienna and Zurich with their psychoanalysis threw some more lights on the important part of human experience in the development of psychological faculties. Nowadays, almost all medical doctors are trying to place their patients in surrounding psychological conditions favourable to their cure. This ushered the entry of 'invisible' or 'subjective' factors into medical practice.

Provoked Miracles :

On the other hand, the therapeutic cults of the United States brought forward a formidable array of proofs of the influence of thought on the control of vital processes in the human body. With the sole exception of His rising from the grave, which some authors have explained as due to natural factors, about all the miracles ascribed to Jesus, have been successfully reproduced in thousands of well authenticated cases, in the three Great American Therapeutic Churches of "Christian Science", "New Thought" and "Unity" and the like. Thus, the list of the well authenticated miracles of Lourdes has been multiplied by a very important coefficient, leaving absolutely no doubt as to the possibility for the human mind backed by faith, to exercise a powerful influence on matter.

Thought and Destiny:

But this is not all. Not only did the immense inquiries pursued by the various "Societies for Psychical Research" bring to light the existence of telepathic faculties expanding almost infinitely the scope of human consciousness, but over and above this, a certain aspect of the Therapeutic cults also established the fact that, through concentration of well-clarified thought the human mind could also develop a sort of power to control the creative adaptation of our surrounding social influences to our human requirements. Already more than a century ago, statisticians used the regular recurrence of some social facts, like the number of divorces, crimes, marriages, suicides, etc. to prove that these facts, most of which seemed to be due to free individual choice, are narrowly determined by permanent social factors. In the same vein, the believers of the therapeutic use of prayer seem to have succeeded in establishing a technique enabling them to exercise an inductive influence on the course of their own material success. For over eighty years, millions of disciples of Christian Science who devote one or two hours daily to 'their work' i.e. the direction through prayer and concentrated thought of their social and financial progress, have reached an average level of economic affluence markedly superior to those of the devotees of other Christian confessions, although these are equally anxious to obtain material success and welfare. But they do not practise as assiduously the use of well directed thought as the disciples of Mrs. Baker Eddy. Of course, we quote this instance only as an example of the possibility of obtaining external results through the use of deliberate thought control. We must confess that to us it would seem unjustified to use highly superior spiritual forces to obtain merely material results. On the other hand, our knowledge of important Eastern religions and their great initiates and holy men has progressed so much in the last half century, that it would be unthinkable now-a-days, for well-informed people, to claim that only Western religions could produce saints holy enough to accomplish miracles. It takes neither wisdom nor science, but Faith to transport mountains, and if the Sages of India were asked "why"?, their answer would likely be that a complete faith, expressing itself in an unconditional "Fiat", induces such a complete submission to the Divine Will, that this expresses Itself, in all its almighty power, in the life of the Creature, in accordance with the teaching of Jesus "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heavens and its righteousness and the rest shall be added unto ye". This finds its equivalent in a Surate of the Coran "To God alone belong Praise and Glory".

Second Pillar of the Sacred Tripod :

A second important factor in the development of religious forms and scriptures was the need felt by mystics to describe their experiences in realms of ineffable lights and unfamiliar mighty and tremendous presences and in trying to account for them. This effort is more or less similar to that of primitive man seeking to grasp the framework of the Universe and to understand its nature and object. These attempts to organise, in ever widening and richer syntheses, the data of this newly discovered universe, provided the frame for the religious and ethical traditions through which men who sensed the call of what the Christian Creed names the 'invisibilia', conceived the world of the "Holy" and its relation with the sacred fount, or founts, of their life. This explains Voltaire's humorous sentence "If God made man in his image, this one amply paid Him back in kind". Each race organizes its concept of God according to the wealth of its traditional imagery. The Judeo-Christian Genesis would have taken a totally different aspect if its scriptors, instead of living among semi-primitive Hebrews hardly emerging out of nomadism, had been born on the banks of the Ganges where the Hindus seemed to have known at about the same epoch that our Earth is a satellite of the Sun, around which it revolves with its sister planets, while the Sun, our Heavenly Father, was only one of the myriads of stars assembled in immense stellar clusters revolving majestically around their centre in the sideral immensities "after the fashion of shoals of fishes in the Ocean." (Laws of Manu). It is difficult to resist the temptation to recognize in this description, surprising for its time, the great ensemble of the galaxies our astronomers discovered in the heavens since the beginning of the XXth century. This does not bring much support to the Theologians who in their serene ignorance of other revelations, are still proclaiming the Judeo-Christian revelation to be the only authentic one, directly inspired by the Creator of the Universe.

The Many Holy Writs :

Indeed, the great variety of "Holy Histories" of the creation of the world which appeared in ancient Mesopotamia, all of them displaying a fundamental ignorance of the physical universe, confirm the fact that they were all due to men labouring under the ignorance of their time and not at all to a fount of omniscience. One could object that it would be extremely unjust to extend to Hindu Theology, whose picture of the world has been largely confirmed by modern astronomy and physics, our rejection of the claims to divine inspiration of the Churches who, until the XVI century and after, clung with terrible inflexibility to the cosmo-conception of the Habirous Nomads of the III millenary B.C. Yet however extraordinary the truth of many of the cosmic views of the Hindu Scriptures, some of their traditional teachings, like those holding that God created the universe through the preliminary formulation of the Vedas (although it is no more shocking than the pretension of some Israelite Rabbi claiming that God before creating the world, first created the Thora as a sort of prefatory scheme of the Universe) seems to be obviously inspired by the totemic cult of the letter and by its identification with the Spirit, which was condemned by Jesus. They led us to adopt with marked reserve some Hindu claims that the totality of their most ancient scriptures are due to transcendental revelations. All the more so, as the higher aspects of Hindu wisdom proclaim conclusively the fundamental inadequacy of all definite formulae to the descriptions of the transcendental fluidities of the Universe.

Thus we stand, so far, before two fundamental factors in the development of religions. First, the universally experienced fact of constant contacts with a subtle reality both subjacent and transcendent to the world of practical experience. Then all through the ages the development of the individual and collective effort amongst human societies to interpret and organize in more or less coherent pictures these spiritual experiences, generally formless or else accompanied by blinding illuminations. These interpretations underwent an evolution parallel to that of the progress of the contents of collective experiences of the representation of the world, from primitive animism and totemism, to the impersonal pantheism of Einstein or the pragmatic compromises of the spiritual monotheism of modern healing cults.

Third Pillar of Religions :

We have yet to take into consideration a third and very important element. It is the development among the devotees of a religion, whose institutions have been strengthened by time and whose collective traditional representations have been well defined, of very strong and compelling institutional dynamisms, binding the consciousness of individuals to a close adhesion to the views slowly elaborated by the collective fervour of whole nations. Shared by the majority of the members of a national or civic body, these collective mental dynamisms of social origin or 'idees forces' as Fouille called them, gave birth to the tribal or political Churches (these being the church of a city (Polis). Almost all ancient capitals of antiquity had their Patron-God. Religious history from the Vth to the IIIrd millenary before Christ shows a sort of parallel evolution of social and religious forms. To the aggregation of small totemic tribal or political (city states) groups, into vast empires, seem to have corresponded first, the absorption of local totemic gods in polytheistic pantheons, whose various gods ended by being subjected to the rule of an Over-God, or Super-God, like Jupiter-Zeus or Jehova. It was the time of the birth of monotheistic cults as in Egypt with Tut Ank Amon, or in Ur where Terach, the father of Abraham, was offering sacrifice to a super solar god. The extension of the cult of these monotheistic gods to vast empires enabled devotees to adapt their religious representations and practice to the administrative scale of the new great empires.

The Souls of Churches :

The influence of the collective psyches of various religions helps the successive generations of devotees to accept the thought forms of their forerunners and to conform to their prescriptions. It is apt to produce two contradictory effects. It can help weak souls to rise up to the average level of their brethren and to keep abreast of the general practice of their religious life. On the contrary, advanced souls, if submitted to psycho-social pressures which they have outgrown, can resent it as an unbearable compulsion which may drive them to abandon their church in order to remain faithful to the higher calls of their conscience, perhaps even expressing their inner difficulties and hopes in the coining of new revelations.

Open and live souls, markedly superior to the average level of their church being relatively rare, it seems that on the whole, the coercive dynamisms leading the majority of devotees to conform to the general practice of their kindred, are more helpful than detrimental. However, when the contradiction between the stagnation of religious representations and the progress of general scientific knowledge becomes too evident for the average minds, a general readjustment of theological concepts to the discoveries of 'exact science' becomes imperative, according to St. Simon's division of the course of history into "harmonious" and "critical" periods.

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CHAPTER II

THE TOUCHSTONE OF HINDUISM

Society versus Cosmos :

This is the cause of the present world crisis. The problem is very intricate and deep-rooted. Its difficulties come from the age-old contradiction between the mighty sentiment in the centre of consciousness, of its intimate belonging to the Cosmic Reality instinctively perceived but never fully realised (like God whose centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere) and the thousand ties of human and social solidarity which bind the inner sensitivity of devotees to an immense stock of religious memories coming from their earliest childhood. One finds these in the touching images of the first elements of religious practices condemned by the austere preachers of the Reformation under the name of Jesulatry and Mariolatry, with the Donkey, the Bull, the straw in the manger, and the incense, myrrh and jewels of Eastern Kings guided by the star of Bethlehem, while the celestial chorus of Angels were spreading the glad tidings, accompanied by the distant harmonies of the organs of the cathedrals of our youth.

The Peace of the Faint Hearted :

For a long time all critical impulses are sharply rejected and the soul, terrified by what it feels to be a foolhardy venture, is swept away from penetrating analytical queries by powerful tidal waves of instinctive loyalty to the memories of youth. It is urged to cling to the faintest reassuring element coming from the regions where the roots of the earliest religious memories blend in the reassuring atmosphere of our babyhood, under the warm wings of motherly love. Then rises a formidable problem. Is it not better to reject the rather vague urges to seek a higher and deeper comprehension of the far away and ethereal Essence of the Cosmos; and, leaving well alone, to continue to go through life rocked by the comfortable purring of an easy and familiar abandon to our old traditional beliefs. In these we commune with the whole line of our ancestors, like Peguy feeling at the door of the bedroom of his old family home, imbued with "four centuries of honour and fidelity", trusting in the promises of the churches and clergies which forcefully assert their redeeming efficacy. On the contrary, our passage upon Earth may be the only chance granted to ephemeral creatures to arrive at salvation through a communion with the transcendent Reality from which springs the Universe. In that case, this communion which is tantamount to reaching "eternal life", may request a complete shedding of any attachment to all alluring aspects of Creation, to earthly relations and happiness and joys as well as to the religious forms and their Letter "which killeth the soul".

Our Awe before the Unknown :

Repeated experiences have proven the fundamental superiority of happiness coming from spiritual representations, over the common material joys. Therefore, even if man's only chance to reap happiness was on this earth and during this single passage upon it, he would be wise to cling with all his might and main to all the comforting ties attaching him to the living and warm religious solidarity of the church of his youth, whatever it may be. Having provided the ideas and images which were the nurture on which his affective life was developed, it is the most effective source of ready superhuman gratification accessible to him. This, if the forlorn materialistic and nihilistic views of the universe were true. On the contrary, if according to the assertion of Hinduism and Buddhism, it is possible for consciousness to escape from the bondage to the collective Karma of the deceptive world of forms and dynamisms, a Karma engendered by the works of successive human generations and constituting the painful cogs of the wheel of necessity; and to rise above this terrible circle of ever unfolding suffering, it behoves one to make an all out effort to break free from the shadows of illusion; however colourful and pleasant habit may have made them, in order to rise to pure light, however invisible; since in the realm of transcendence it meets no reflecting obstacle nor descriptive limits.

Once more, Pascal's Wager :

If there were no other possible choice, but between a mild, amiable, peaceful fool's paradise whose reassuring, if illusory images were replete with the matured sentimental wealth of our infantile treasures, and the silent empty void of infinite space whose intemporality frightened the immortal author of the "Pensees", we would be in a quandary even more ominous than the one he faced in his time. Being given the diversity of the variegated elements making up "the human soul", it would take an abnormally keen intelligence to deliberately give up our familiar satisfactions in order to rise to transcendence. Most human beings are not prepared to sacrifice the many joys of earthly existence in a heroic hara kiri of temporal values, to pass through the portals of the new birth into the sacred void which we call transcendent intemporality. Better leave their time honoured, if childish happiness to the souls which are yet incapable of sacrificing the "old Man" of St. Paul, with his habits which may yet bring many precious harmonies in their family and social life, rather than risk awakening in them a dark and dreary despair leading to destructive and soul destroying revolt.

The Spirit being transcendent to any form as well as to all sentiments and even to time and space, may seem too ethereal and rather inactual to the average earthly people. However, although transcendent, it is the subtle but all powerful essence and origin of any reality and of any quality.

There are several ways in which the cynical words of Voltaire 'a religion is necessary for the riffraff', can be understood. Too often it is interpreted as meaning that a chastising God is necessary to keep simple souls in order. "The fear of God . . . ". In the vein of Prota goras, we might give Voltaire's dictum a more pragmatic and less contemptuous interpretation, taking it to mean that since human beings are so different in their mental calibre, the under-privileged should be allowed to frame for themselves a practical religion adapted to the 'measure of man'. Not of man in general, which does not exist outside the realm of statistics, neither to that of the man 'pure spirit made in the image of God', but to the human status they have attained individually and who can only tackle tasks adapted to his skills. Any sort of spiritual blackmail savouring of the challenge of highway robbers 'your purse or your life', would be completely out of order, even if based on the tragic warning of Jesus "he who would save his life shall lose it", and the affirmation that eternal salvation can only be secured through sacrificing all precious ties, "unless he hates his father and mother". If this were interpreted as a 'Do ut des' bargain, it would amount to a spiritual swindle, a barter with a mercantile God endowed with the fearsome characteristics of the gods of Antiquity conceived after the pattern of cruel Assyrian emperors or the bloodthirsty Phenician Moloch. Let us rather think of the smiling pragmatism of the Jesuit Fathers, who courted the confidence of the syncretic Chinese by replacing in their churches the statues of the Virgin by those of Kwanyin, the familiar and beloved feminine Buddha.

From Nought to the Void:

Today we no longer stand before that kind of "All or Nothing" choice, which should compel us to choose between error or nothingness. The new vision of the world resulting from the progress of psychology and Cosmic Physics have, so to speak, to use Sartre's expression 'noughted' the 'All' we are urged to give up; and endowed the ethereal causal world we should strive to reach, with a positive infinitude reminiscent of 'the Fulness of the Void' on which Buddhist initiates are invited to meditate and which is very near the Spirit in its purest aspect. We shall now seek to indicate the main contribution of contemporary physics and psychology to a better understanding of our participation to the life of the Cosmos and the part we might have to play in it.

Omnia Vanitas:

To begin with, by throwing a vivid light on the nature and the organization of our sensory perceptions, psychology completely renews the various problems concerning the adaptation of man to the laws of the Universe in this Life and the next. We have effectively verified the esoteric theories of the old religions on the illusory character of our World. It is no longer only in the metaphysical comparison of fleeting earthly objects with the eternal permanency of the transcendent universe, that all worldly goods seem to be vain, as affirmed by the Jewish Ecclesiast, or Maya, illusion according to Hinduism. The psycho-physiological study of the functioning of our various sensory organs has shown beyond any doubt that all the characteristics of anything we see, hear or touch, are entirely produced by our senses and in no way correspond to the objects about which they spin their "yarns", their descriptions. As Plato already said, they are due to the impact upon our senses of colourless, odourless, silent, invisible flows of energies devoid of definite outlines—and only perceptible because of their elaboration by the various active components of our senses, into visual, auditory or tactile images. Our various sensory organs being capable only of registering a small sector of the vibrations irradiated by outer objects, our perceptions can only give fragmentary and arbitrary descriptions of the cosmic reality.

Divisible Atoms :

This factual knowledge, after having been first arrived at, nearly a century ago by the psycho-physiologists, was corroborated beyond doubt fifty years later by physicists. They dispelled the antiquated idea of eternal and indivisible atoms when they discovered that the primary elements of matter were made up of fleeting combinations of positive, negative or neutral energies of various natures. Most of the problems which challenged our forefathers regarding their own nature, their participation to the life of the Universe, and the conditions of a future life, must be completely reconsidered. If, in the real being of the dear ones we want to consort with after death, there is absolutely no feature corresponding in fact to the aspects under which we knew them, and whose elements were constantly created by our retinas, our ear drums, our tactile, olfactory and gustatory papillas, and by the corresponding nervous centres; under which form could we continue our relations with them after death? Unless we be endowed in the other world with sensory organs capable of working on what could be radiated by our dear ones and produce similar representations, which might be just as fallacious, fictitious and deceptive as the perceptions of our living experiences, this problem does not seem to make much sense.

The crux of the problem :

This disappearance of the constituting elements of the familiar aspects of our beloved ones does not necessarily imply that it is impossible for us to have any more relations with them. The experiences of great mystics, the researches of our Master Henri Delacroix on imageless thinking, as well as those of Bergson on intuition, confirming Kant's criticism, authorize us to believe in the possibility of the existence, between conscious beings, of relations based on the perception of qualitative, or even quantitative (i.e. numerical) differences, these perceptions being registered, or sensed, without passing through the focus of the sensory organs. Unless we insist like spoiled children on wanting, against all possibilities, things to be as we want them to be, we must relegate to the realm of lost illusions, all expectations of a realisation in our future existence of all the former imaginary representations of our past regarding our nature, that of our dear ones and of the whole universe, in a supreme and virile effort to attune our thinking with the exigencies of our new knowledge of reality. We must at last realize that we live between two universes, the one we constantly create in ourselves by the accumulation of illusory sensory perceptions arising from our 'earthly' experiences, and the other, which is invisible although its data engender the preceding one. We cannot perceive it, but we can grasp its Laws with the help of rational intelligence, of which Plato with his amazing genius already told us in his Theetetes that "it sits at the rudder of the soul."

"I feel two men in me" (Victor Hugo) :

All men live astride these two worlds, the empirical world unfurled by our senses apace with the 'becoming' of creation, which is illusory and deceptive, and the rational universe. We feel tempted to call it the world of reality although its organization is mainly founded upon comparisons between streams of energies revealed to us by rational intelligence which organizes their comparisons in definite concepts. But all men do not share equally in these two worlds although all can accede to their two sets of representations, or rather data. Among those whom Aristotle called 'the many', consciousness is almost exclusively turned towards practical action on the objects revealed by the senses and which we want to use,' the world of the "how". Only a small part of their pre-occupations turns towards the realm of causes, the world of the 'why', of the problems evoked by facts and which we only discover in the measure in which the mind is capable of disentangling itself from material preoccupations and a utilitarian attachment to objects whose aspects are formed by our senses.

From illusory boons to shadowy reality:

One example shall suffice to indicate the paradoxical difference between those two worlds. It is a matter of general experience that every morning the Sun appears in the East, progressively rising to the zenith continuing its circular orb towards the Western horizon behind which it disappears in the growing darkness of twilight. From these perceptions it was an easy inference that this circular course was continued all through the night, the Sun going to the Nadir and rising again in the Orient to bring back light to the world as soon as it soared above the horizon. The majority of humans accepted this interpretation with a cheerful trust, before and after the Genesis had taught that 'on the fourth day God created the Sun to shed light upon the Earth during the day' and the moon and stars to perform the same office during the night. This until the time when thoughtful Occidental savants, prompted by rational deductions on the observation of facts, unnoticed by casual observers, like the slow changes in the oscillations of the pendulum, came to realise that the earth was revolving on its axis. It completely and finally changed the traditional interpretation of the daily resurgence of the rising sun in the East, into that of our planet constantly revolving eastward, alternately towards and away from the Sun . . . that was a complete victory of abstraction and reason upon the empirical observation of 'matter of fact' passive thinkers. On the other hand, the problem of the origin of a correct understanding of the structure of the Universe by the Sages of India, ages before it was discovered by Western science, remains unsolved.

However, in the light of our new knowledge of the Cosmos, we must realize that most of our opinions on the nature of our worldly surroundings are as fundamentally erroneous as the traditional belief in "experience" of the gyration of the sun around the earth. This is made worse by the fact that the very nature of the objects whose relations we observe, remains beyond our ken.

From enticing illusion to creative moral effort :

The fundamental transformation in our interpretation of the world brings in its train a terrible problem for those who believe in a just and good personal God. The world of appearances which surrounds us and elicits our interests and desires is created by our senses, in all its details. According to most religions and many philosophies, human minds, whatever their origins, are called to undergo and to achieve a perfection enabling them to return to the transcendence from which they emerged or were shed. Why should this just and good Creator, have endowed these consciousnesses springing from 'liaisons' connecting them with other dynamic structures, with the faculty to create sensory perceptions of colours, forms, textures, capable of shrouding or enveloping the objects we meet in veils of variegated illusions? Also why should we be irresistibly conditioned to attribute to these deceptive illusions, values making them supremely dear and desirable? This problem gives an unforeseen and dreadful meaning to the Lord's Prayer "et ne nos inducas in tentationem" (lead us not into temptation), temptations which are as many hindrances on our ascending part to the Spirit and might launch us into ill-advised undertakings which, according to some, are capable of landing us in an endless train of castigations: eternal damnation?

Far be it from us to think of the Almighty as being subject to sentiments akin to those of a cat playing with mice . . . This doubtful fantasy helps us to realize how drastic and fundamental must be the re-appraisal of all religious problems rendered necessary by the more rational and adequate appreciation of the world of facts, to which we have arrived through tens of centuries of trial and error. Traditional rules of ethics are based on a belief in the reality of the realm of mundane illusions, the Creator of which seems to have revelled in multiplying deceitful appearances while endowing our hearts with a great capacity to be beguiled by them. But everything appears more acceptable if eternal damnation is also an illusion and if illusory temptations can play in the development of our moral fibre the part of dumbells in a gymnasium. In the light of this view, some teachings become more factual, more pregnant: "My Kingdom is not of this world", "he who desires in his heart the goods of his neighbour has already sinned", "sell thy goods, distribute them to the poor and follow me."

On the contrary, teachings on the resurrection of the body of flesh, lose all importance. The same applies to the grandiose and minute descriptions of the spectacular Marvels of the Paradise of Dante, of the New Jerusalem 'a la Swendenborg', as well as the teachings relative to the honourable seats 'at the right of the Father' and the concerts of Angelic choirs with their harps of gold . . . Now we understand why a really spiritual state must be, *ipso facto,* beyond space-time; unless we had in view the provisory Paradise of demiurgic Deities destined to disappear at the end of time, at 'the consummation of centuries' as in the Devaloka of some Hindu concepts.

The fact is that Hindu theologies are extraordinarily rich, containing practically all the doctrines found in the history of religions, from primitive animism and Polytheism to the highest doctrines of strictly impersonal spiritual Monism, like that of our great contemporary Scientists, passing on the way through the different forms of personalist theism, unitarian, dualistic, trinitarian or Tri-unitarian.

The Law of Manu :

It is worthwhile to ponder on some of its surprising doctrines. They help us to realize the scope and variety of religious problems. Their first important point is that, from remote Antiquity, Hindus had an almost correct knowledge of the structure of the Universe. "Manu's Laws" are probably older than the first destruction of Jerusalem temple which led Jewish Rabbis to study the various eastern religions then holding sway in Babylon. It was also the time of Buddha's preaching six centuries B.C. It goes perhaps as far back as the Jewish exodus out of Egypt under Moses. Thousands of years ago this "Manu smriti" already taught these fundamental doctrines:

(I) Our earth is not the centre of the Universe but, like its surrounding planets Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Mercury, Saturn, etc., it is a mere satellite of the Sun around which it gravitates in their company.

(II) The Gods of the Trimurti (Hindu Creative Trinity) Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, when considered from the cosmic point of view, are only operative deities whose creative act is limited to the production of our solar system, called Brahma's egg—BRAMANDA—because of the egg-like form of the orbs described around the sun by its satellites.

(III) Our Heavenly Father, the Sun—SURYA—far from being the centre of the Universe, is only one star amongst myriads of other stars, at various stages of their creation and evolution, since they have not been created simultaneously.

(IV) Each sun is created by a particular Trimurti. Thus there are in our universe myriads of Brahmas, Vishnus and Shivas, as already stated by Thales "The Whole is full of Gods".

(V) The Law of Manu further states that in the infinite celestial spaces the myriads of myriads of eggs of Brahma are grouped in immense clusters of millions of stars revolving around their centres. This was a prodigious anticipation of the latest developments in Astronomy. After the discovery that the sun was part of the milky way, and later that there were innumerable other milky ways, each one revolving on its own centre, the position of modern astronomy was voiced by Eddington at the time of the first World War: "One hundred millions of suns make a milky way and one hundred millions of milky ways make a Universe". Since then, modern means of investigation have so enlarged our known universe that galaxies are now considered as being made up of billions of stars (the census of the suns in our one is now over two billions). Moreover, galaxies are no longer considered as being fundamental cosmic units, but held to be grouped in metagalaxies or great galactic ensembles made up of enormous numbers of galaxies.

This amazing expansion of our known universe has enabled a modern scientific genius, Lord Kelvin, to state that: a solar system can be considered as playing in our galaxy a part similar to that of a molecule in a gas. The metagalaxies themselves can be considered as forming distinct cosmic entities because they are subjected to a Newtonian gravitation keeping their component galaxies at relatively constant distances amongst themselves and in the midst of a particular atmosphere containing gaseous clouds permitting dynamic exchanges between galaxies which give their ensembles somewhat of the character of organic wholes.

Inside the metagalaxies, individual galaxies whirl round their own centre in periods which for our own galactic heaven, with an equatorial diameter of about 100,000 light years, last about 250 million years. Since its birth nearly 4 billion years ago, our earth has thus followed our sun 16 times in its participation in the revolution of our galaxy around its centre . . . Some modern authorities in the field of astronomy hold that there may be hundreds of metagalaxies forming distinct universes. In the outer spaces, exchanges of cosmic rays would be impossible because of the lack of adequate mediums capable of transmitting radiations. These metagalaxies are held to be receding from each other at speeds which are amazing for our usual norms.

It is surprising to remark that the cosmo-conception of the Law of Manu, although completely different from our Genesis, is on the whole, compatible with the picture of the world presented by modern astronomy.

The Manu "smriti" (Law) further states that the innumerable Trimurtis, each one with its particular Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, are all engendered by the operative aspect of a supreme Trinity, which being the One and Only Creator of the whole Universe, is comparable to the Gods of Occidental monotheistic religions regarded also as creators of the Cosmic Whole. This transcendent God, the "Supreme Being", "The Ancient of Days", anterior to the beginning of Time, is constituted by the three aspects, or rather the three ontogenetic phases of a Transcendent Trinitarian Creator. They are: (1) PARABRAHMAN, Absolute, Transcendent to Being as well as to Non-Being, and baffling any attempt at description; (2) Emerging out of pure intemporal virtuality, PARABRAHMAN, out of the infinity of virtual possibilities, choosing those He is going to make use of, becomes NIRGUNA

BRAHMAN, the virtual Creator, tending towards being, but having as yet no attribute, not even that of being a creator; (3) This attributeless Brahma becomes SAGUNA BRAHMAN i.e. creator with attributes, that of creative power endowed with the faculty and will to create. This willing constitutes the beginning of creation, with the passing of non-being to being. For the Creator, the mere willing to create, *ipso facto* achieves the passing from power to actualization, in a preview of Aristotelian Entelechias. Goethe, who was a great seer, expressed this in the famous lines of the prologue to his Faust: "Im Anfang war die Tat": In the beginning was the Act. To effectuate creation, SAGUNA BRAHMAN calls into active being Mulaprakriti, the eternal virtuality of the essence of matter, the Hyle of Greek philosophy.

It is difficult to grasp the nature of Mulaprakriti and the process through which ISHVARA—the name given to SAGUNA BRAHMAN, the Creator when he passes from power to action—brings about the birth of the three divine agents of the TRIMURTI, the Hindu demiurgic trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. An investigation of the atoms shall help us.

Birth of Atoms:

These are constituted by parcels of various kinds of energies, positive and negative electrons, neutrons, protons, revolving around a nucleus according to a pattern whose scheme is the element of stability of their particular species. If one of its elements were lacking, this particular atom would not be.

For Hinduism, essential matter, when the three faculties constituting its elements are in equilibrium, perfectly balancing each other, is a mere possibility, inert and formless. Its condition is similar to that of light which remains completely transparent and colourless until it passes through a prism refracting its constituent components in differentiated colour waves. As long as the three potential faculties of matter perfectly balance each other, during the intemporal interruption between the end of the time of a Universe and the beginning of the time of the next Universe, the appearance of any form of being is completely impossible. These three virtual potentialities are RAJAS, fundamental principle of motion, TAMAS, fundamental principle of inertia and stability, and SATVA, fundamental principle of balance and harmony between the parts of any existing organism. No material element may be formed without the participation of these three principles of being any more than a material object with two dimensions only could be actualised in Space-Time.

Actualization of the Creator :

SAGUNA BRAHMAN emerges out of virtuality by stirring the three latent faculties of eternal, or rather untemporal matter, since it persists through the passing manifestations of time. This latter, in its intemporal virtuality corresponds, perhaps, to the 'Darkness in the beginning' of the Genesis. As the Creator accomplishes his act, he receives the name of ISHVARA. He corresponds 'grosso modo' to the activity of our Trinity, but only in the restricted precincts of creation of our solar system. It calls to life BRAHMA, the creative person of the TRIMURTI, by stimulating into activity the RAJAS principle of essential matter. By acting on TAMAS, the principle of inertia and of the limitations necessary to the formation of finite beings in their reality (from "res", 'thing' in latin), ISHVARA engenders SHIVA. Then, in relation to the two other persons of the TRIMURTI, ISHVARA brings about by acting on Satva, the emergence of VISHNU, God of Love, of the harmonious organization and conservation of beings, by preserving the conditions necessary to the well balanced perpetual flux of life through them.[1]

Tripartite Substance :

In the same way that the formation of an atomic structure of a given type is impossible without the combination in the right proportion of all the modes of energy necessary to produce the pattern of the said atom; according to Hindu views, no existence, or even element of the organization of a being, could be achieved in our Solar System, without the intimate and proportionate participation of the three persons of the TRIMURTI: BRAHMA, VISHNU and SHIVA. Since Vishnu is the mediatory central factor in the midst of all aspects of created beings, He could be regarded as the Sacred Heart of the whole creation, another resemblance to the second person of the Christian Trinity. One is dumbfounded at the similitudes between these extremely ancient theories of Hindu metaphysics, contemporary if not anterior to those of the old Egyptians and the theories with which modern physicists attempt to interpret the manifestations of life in its elementary forms. We can understand why Indian students in our Western universities have less difficulty in adapting their thinking to the new concepts of matter than some of their Western fellow students. However, could one be entitled to claim that the pattern of the universe indicated by Hinduism corresponds to the description by Eddington of the balancing, in the dynamic structure of stellar masses of the galaxies of the three factors: gravity, elasticity and pressure or radiation? ?

A very important point is to note that if the innumerable trimurtis are similar in the pattern of their genesis, all having been created by ISHVARA, they are not contemporary. Their respective falls into Space-Time, which for our 'historical' human point of view constitute their real birth, their passing from paradigm to actuality; takes place or rather occurs at different moments of the cosmic duration, this moment corresponding to the origin of the 'time of becoming' of their respective universes. Accordingly the creation of the world in which we function; our solar system, was a minor local matter in our galaxy, and in no way constituted the primary beginning of the Universe. At which moment of the Cosmic History did our earthly creation of "the six days" really happen? Some astronomers think our Sun has not yet reached middle life, as far as this goes for stars, and is a comparatively recent arrival in our galaxy.

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[1] The formal similarity between ISHVARA and ISHA, the Aramean original of the name of Jesus, has been pointed out. This may be compared with the theory upheld by Professor Dumezil, on the Indian origin of the Myth of the proto-history of Roma (Roma-Rama).

Another important point of the Law of Manu is that the eggs of Brahma follow the course of their lives in one of the shoals of fishes which it describes as gyrating in the celestial spaces in an exact semblance to our Galaxy. The three small gods of our Trimurti have a definite realm, our solar system, a history with its assigned beginning and end; moreover, they behave like personal entities and have personal histories described by the Ramayana, more or less like some of our personal Gods in the West. Ishvara, intermediary between absolute transcendence and concretized relative personal existence, belongs neither to Creation nor to Transcendence. Barely grazing the outskirts of Space-Time with the tips of its wings (i.e. the incipiency of time) to bring about the birth of the Gods of Trimurti, He is only acting at a distance like a catalytic agent, without getting included in the sway of the Law of Karma which He imposes on Demiurges. This constitutes a fundamental difference between the two realms of godly concepts. Trimurti Gods are individual, mortal, like their "Egg of Brahma", and their human creatures, may achieve personal relations with them. The "One" of whom Ishvara is an immaterial projection, is infinite, untemporal, impersonal and transconscious. The only way for an individual to reach Him is through the abolition of his differentiated existence "Ab neget semet ipsum" in complete surrender to the Law His will imposes on the universe, the law of Karma or 'action'. This law is considered in its constant relation with the world of immutable archetypes in whose realm, like the "Alpha and Omega" of Jesus, the creative beginning of an act is simultaneous with its projected results in time in the untemporal everpresence of spiritual nearness. However, in the falling in evolutionary relative process, the ensemble of Karma is the origin of the splitting of primeval cosmic unity in the variety of separate beings. This passive submission to Karma implies the complete disappearance from an understanding mind of egocentric urges capable of engendering even the shadow of diverging from the ruling norms of the Cosmos, thus uprooting the possibility of a separate person. We are thus confronted with the necessity of a total shedding of any attachment to everything pertaining to our little earth, as in the Buddhist preparation for Nirvana. Thus, not only the gods of our Trimurti are there, but they belong to a numberless array of million of millions of other Trimurtis. The Supreme Brahman is absolutely single. He is "The One Without a Second", "EKAM ADVAITAM", transcendent to the attributes of persons, and even to Being. Thus Hinduism is an absolute Monism, whose transcendence is so dazzling that it reduces to nought any particular Being even that of a personal God. Of course there remains the awesome problem of the possible existence of other original creators for the many distinct immense metagalaxies in what would be a pluralistic universe!

CHAPTER III

ETHICAL REVOLUTION OF GALACTIC ERA

Two realms of morality:

Thus the relations of human beings with the realms of the Divine World become completely different. Just as in the practice of the personalist religions of the West, a Hindu may personally offer prayers to the three persons of the Trimurti, uniting himself in intention with their interventions in the operations of the laws of nature and also in their control of the lives of creatures and persons which they exercise in the precincts of our small geo-solar world. Vis-a-vis the Supreme Creator, Transcendent to the Metagalaxies, any attempt at a personal intervention would be illusory and impertinent, even in the form of penance or atonement. The notion of an offence to God in the case of the Absolute is irrelevant. It could only be conceived towards a personalized being located in Space-Time. It is replaced by that of Karma, attributing an irremediable creative power to each act, whose moral import is irretrievably attached to it as soon as it is committed, to last until the complete exhaustion of all its dire consequences. It binds the actor to the fruits of his act, in a closed cycle. It is the rule of an absolute cosmic justice, it can neither be annulled nor forgiven, yet it can be compensated, if bad, by acts of an equivalent dynamism and of a reparatory nature. As in the observance of the Mitzvoth for the Jews, morality consists in following as closely as possible the laws of the Universe in which there is absolutely no scope for derogation, nor forgiveness of sins. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness". It is useless to expect any leniency from cosmic laws, or count upon an 'abnormal' change of mind of their framer, if any, which could bring Him to will an exceptional modification of their course.

On the contrary, an offence to God is completely inconceivable. The Transcendent is not accessible to anything coming from relativity. A Hindu proverb says: "The Sage could no more be offended by the insults of the fool than the snowy ranges of the Himalayas by the hissing of a snake". Jaures used to say: "It is not he who wants to insult me, who can", "ne m'insulte pas qui veut".

The possibility for a puny individual to really offend the Transcendent Creator of all demiurges in the millions of galaxies and their billions of solar systems seems a completely idle problem. On the contrary, the notion of an imperative duty binding every human being to live in obedience and deference to the laws of the particular section of the World to which we belong and to whose becoming we are associated, of the obligation which Kant so vividly felt and expressed, seems to be endowed with an unescapable pregnancy, a 'categoric imperative' which imparts a quality of greatness to the human being who, deliberately choosing to adhere to the laws of the cosmos in the spirit of Marcus Aurelius prayer, identify themselves with it. Thus Hinduism, offering two levels in the realm of the Divinity, the lower immediate, restricted and temporary, within the reach of man, and the upper, total, infinite and absolutely transcendent to anything; also presents two tiers of morality.

The first one, proposed to men still attached to personal Gods, and to the illusory values of Maya, enjoins total abstaining from any offence to God or sin against Him, "the fear of God", and the pursuit of a perfection which raises him up to His likeness: "Be ye Holy as I am Holy", (Thora): "Become ye perfect as my

Father in Heaven". The second does not enjoin the reaching of the likeness (?) to God. It calls man to a "one way, final communion, Samadhi, a unifying immolation of man in God of which one finds a sort of preview in Zoroaster's call to Aryans to fight for the fulfilment of God's plan to the cosmos. Since the distance from man to God is infinite, the supreme level of religion does not request the rising to a higher level of nearness or perfection, but the dispelling of all particularizing or individualizing attributes of any element of Being, which can only be developed in the becoming in space-time, in the fold of the world of the Fall, below boundless Unity.

One could think that this annihilation of the particular Self which seems to be the supreme objective of Higher Hinduism and original Buddhism, is so dreary for the elementary instinct of self preservation that it would be repellent for 'normal people'. This is far from true. The experiences of great mystics and saints demonstrate beyond doubt that, in the measures in which souls rise above the sentimental and mental habits forming the 'normal' level of their consciousness, they enjoy ever higher forms of bliss and felicity; also, they cease to be drawn to things springing out of Space-Time and becoming.

Let us face the problems posed to modern man by the adaptation of religious practice to our fluid and changing times. Our incursion into Hindu metaphysics shall be of a great help to us.

The most vital, immediate and richest aspect of religion is mysticism, the practice of the presence of God, of communion with the conscious levels of universal emerging (?) to quote Whitehead: How could communion have any value if it did not seek absorption in the essential reality inherent under all forms which it engenders and preserves in Being, under all their evanescent appearances?

Mysticism and Memory :

On the other hand, we also know how the capacity of the Consciousness of man to conceive and organize its inner loyalties, enthusiasm, love and creative endeavours, is limited by the sum of its memories, its stock of experiences and information, its judgment of nature and values. He has to draw out of these the elements of the formulation which will help him not only to give an account of his spiritual experiences but even to become conscious of their import. It provides the garments of "forms" which will establish a connecting link between new experiences in the unknown spiritual world, and the familiar aspects of religious experience allowing new perceptions of unknown dimensions of truth by providing necessary veils to the revelation of new lights, blinding because of their purity, "No one can behold Me and live" said Jehovah to Moses. Now, with the Hindu description of the inherent participation of the three Persons of the Trimurti, in the most intimate structures of all creatures and the most intimate modalities of their lives, we have hypotheses allowing the description of the conscious manifestations of Universal Life, in a way which is both moving in its relation with the most intimate modalities of our inner life, and grandiose in the extension of its concatenations to the most remote element of the whole Reality of the Universe. Moreover Physics, under its cosmic aspect, may provide us with another capitally important element in religious "Renaissance", whether it takes the form of a revival of old Churches in a limbering up of their ancient forms and symbols, or of the development of the effort of new generations, to participate ever more consciously and harmoniously in the expanding modalities of Universal life. And surprisingly, it is to the development of our mystical life, in the organisation of our exercises for concentration and communion that the concepts of Cosmo-Physics are to be most practically useful.

Memory, fount of perception and spring board of intuition :

The awareness of the existence of a mysterious realm behind the appearances of the physical universe sensed by many people who feel the presence of a tremendous power ever at work behind the scenery of the theatrum mundi, may play a great part in the urge to the mystical quest. But this challenge of the hidden side of things owes most of its power to the presence in the memory of a whole train of images and experiences which suggest all sorts of awe-inspiring and grandiose possibilities.

The call to spiritual endeavour postulates this belief in the inherent and essential presence of a Creator, or at least of a creative norm at work inside all beings, with all the marvellous implications of such a vista of glory, and also of the possibility of acceding to it. If, according to most theologies, the Eternal, through the projection of His creative will, is ever present in the center of man, all this one needs to do is to dispel the veils of illusions which prevent him from complying with the injunction of the Greek Oracle "Man, become that which thou art".

However, this rational deduction has a weak point. It takes for granted the very thing we want to elucidate: the authenticity of the sense of the presence of God in the innermost recess of the soul.

If one has not had a rich and varied spiritual life or is not stirred to great expectations by the urges of a pious devotee, meditations before a blank page, or a black point, or before a naked wall, as is advised by some mystical schools, run the risk of not leading to very fervent enthusiasm. The candidate must already possess a rich stock of familiar images which may be used as themes for his meditations. This is generally the case with mystic aspirants in Hindu or Buddhist monasteries where these abstract methods of meditation are in use. They dedicate many years to the study of their cosmogonies with their wealth of symbols, myths and analogical formal representations. Their mind is filled with a wealth of mystico-theological elements of comparisons and interpretations. For us the problem at hand is how to re-awaken sceptical Occidentals, absorbed in most concrete forms of action, to the enthusing intuitions revealing to man the wonder of his intimate participation in the great Cosmic rhythms, whether these proceed from a Creator or from the eternal returning of cosmic history.

This faculty to attain spiritual experiences through which men reach the highest forms of happiness and, perhaps, also what theologians call Eternal Salvation, is rooted in the development of the intuitive perception of the intimate correspondences between the different elements of our inner life and the operations of the cosmic laws at work both in our worldly surroundings and in their penetration in the realm of our consciousness, through the reactions of our senses as these are subjected to their activities. The experiences of great mystics may indicate whether that sentimental communion or participation in the work of cosmic rules, or cosmocrats, expands, or not to the whole of our metagalaxy, our 'heavenly home'. As to the possibility of conscious relations with the many other metagalaxies, one may wonder what degree of conscious correspondence with the quasi-infinitude of these ensembles could be attained by our consciousness developed in the limited surroundings of our small solar satellite, our Mother Earth. . . .

Religious experiences and Felicity:

Spiritual experiences which one must not confuse with objective formal visions, are not only the most immediate sources of the highest felicities. They are also the most powerful instruments of moral growth, for they annul or annihilate the false values which awaken fiery passions in blind souls. Above all, they are the finest stimulants for the regular and fervent practice of meditation and concentration which are the best means of development of spiritual growth. Through their exercises, the higher spiritual faculties are developed, nurtured, refined and sublimated until they lift consciousness up to the verge of transcendence, above the whirl of the world of becoming, of the cycles of births and deaths up to the threshold of eternal life.

Three elements of consciousness :

Cosmic physics offer our consciousness precious themes for its familiarization with the various modalities of experiences in the midst of the Universe. This familiarization with the universal data is one of the major conditions of religious communion, provided we do not allow interest in the exterior aspects of phenomena to obliterate the presence of the infinitely precious essential reality constantly at work within and above all objects of the Cosmos.

Scientists are becoming ever more conscious of the fundamental unity at the back of all forms of manifestation, were it only in the guise of the universal force of attraction, source of the universal gravitation, which rules over all known forms, from the internal revolutions of electrons inside atoms to the relations between enormous galaxies in the midst of the inconceivable magnitude of metagalaxies. In all these, the balance achieved between the attractions and repulsions of their constituting elements offers a thought provoking parallel with the universal cooperation of the three persons of the Trimurti.

Structure and Consciousness, or Brahman and Atman :

Moreover, this brings us to what is perhaps the fundamental problem of the Universe, the passing from unity to diversity. We saw how Hinduism describes the association of Ishvara, the projection of the creative transcendent Trinity, with virtual matter, Mulaprakriti, in the creation of solar systems, the local elements of the Universe. This introduces us to a sort of dualistic origin of the world reminiscent of the old dualism of Force and Matter of Haeckel. But the Hindu view of cosmic structure also includes another dualistic conception, that of the intimate and fundamental association of consciousness with the organized and structural manifestations of life. Consciousness and structure constitute the two elements of all beings, corresponding to the two aspects under which Hinduism describes the Universal Creator of the world, Saguna Brahman, which, when considered as the active universal principle has two names: Brahman and Atman. Brahma, without a final 'n', is the masculine name of the first person of Trimurti; Brahman is the neutral name of the creator of the Universe. But it applies to its activity as the origin of the differentiating organizations of the structures of particular beings, while Atman, also universal, is the origin of the various modes of consciousness inherent in the structures of the living organisms; and all objects in the Universe are alive in some way or other. All objects consist of aggregates of various dynamic elements. Any aggregate provides the opportunity for the development of some measure of consciousness, springing from the nascent awareness of relations between its various components. These various qualities of consciousness may range from their humblest forms as expressed in chemical affinities between mineral atoms, or in the various tropisms in the reactions of plants to heat, water, light, air, etc., rising up to the highest forms of communion engendered by the creative faculties of human souls until they dissolve in the sublime worlds of metaphysical or transcendental unity.

This, to rest content with the forms of consciousness with which human beings are familiar. The higher forms of religious experiences, attain a culminating point where consciousness appears to reach such a paroxysm of expansion in the realm of quality that it seems to burst into infinitude.[1] This is accompanied by the disappearance of all differentiating perceptions which are the origin of differentiating consciousness. There appears to be no reason why the association of noospheres of planets gravitating around a sun should not bring about the development of a higher form of consciousness as it did in preceding associations. It is not impossible that some of the most exalted spells of cosmic consciousness of great mystics may be due to their reaching to the noosphere of the cosmic aggregate of which our planetary or solar noospheres are elementary parts. But this is obviously a realm where phantasy runs too easily into aberration.

Ascension to light :

We may assume that living aggregates are capable of fostering the emergence of modes of consciousness whose affective, representative or volitive faculties will be rich and powerful in proportion to the number and quality of the elements which constitute them, and also according to the degree of their integration of the various elements which provide the creative repercussions and associations between these constitutive elements.

Father Teilhard de Chardin described the formation of a noosphere, as the collective aggregation of all forms of consciousness on a planet. One cannot help but think of the definition of consciousness given by Le Dantec, one of the great materialist thinkers of the end of the XIX century: "Consciousness is the sentiment of liaisons". This definition could also be used for intelligence, 'intellectio' can be interpreted as meaning 'to read between', an ability to read between the lines, to perceive unexpressed relations between objects and situations.

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[1] "Confessions of a Contemporary Mystic" J. de Marquette.

From our metagalaxy to others :

After the discovery of the flows of cosmic rays and of the intergalactic clouds of celestial dust, providing the possibility of magnetic currents between the galaxies in the interior of our metagalaxy, came the finding that the possibility of the extension to the whole of our metagalaxy, of the faculty to become aware of organized relations developed in our restricted planetary world, with its essential participation in our solar system, and even in our galaxy, is not a rank impossibility. It awakens a reminiscence of the Pythagorean theories attributing to the souls of the immortalized heroes a felicitous abode among the stars of the milky way. It is possible that St. Paul, a profoundly hellenised Jew, had this theory in view, when he said he knew a man who had been ravished to the third heaven, that of the great gods, the Greek Olympos. This extended to the milky way, while the second heaven, or Cosmos, was the world of our solar system, and the first heaven, Ouranos, was the subsolar heaven.

At any rate, we must beware of thwarting the possible extension of our consciousness to the whole universe, if we submit to the anthopomorphizing mania of our traditional theologians, who would have us tied to the mediaeval fable concerning the stay of the elect in an alluringly lovely "Paradise" for teen-agers.

When we consider the universe of phenomena, we must never lose sight of the fact that all living forms, from atoms to metagalaxies, are constituted by an amazingly constant flow of energy. From the cosmic point of view, all beings, as well as all faculties, are but passing moments, almost instantaneous, of an infinity of evolutionary arcs, each one, an aspect of the "elan vital" whose origins date back to the creation of the ensemble to which they belong.

Let us not forget when we think of metagalaxies that, before reaching us, the light coming from them has often been on its way for millions of years. In many cases, astronomers see fossile light as old as the fossile vegetable of the carboniferous layers going back to the tertiary geological age. The taking into consideration of the newly discovered age of the components of the millions of milky ways, some as old as four or five billions of years, helps us to understand why Einstein felt constrained to consider time as one of the constituting elements of the four dimensional universe; a concept to which our human intellect, steeped in the beholding of ephemeral appearances and brought up in the idea of the basic element of matter being a static mass, finds it very difficult to adjust itself. Also we must never lose sight of the statistical origin of all scientific generalizations which allow for the emerging in their range of unexpected possibilities. Bearing in mind the relativity of the physical laws described by science in the immense universe, a relativity to which a Philosophical genius, Boutroux dedicated his famous thesis "On the contingency of the laws of nature" (1875); we shall look at the scale of material organizations described by our modern cosmoconception with a view to their possible contribution to the progress of consciousness in their organization.

The three Souls :

Let us rapidly remind our readers that the majority of religious traditions envisioned the existence of a series of spiritual levels in human souls, the variety of which may be considered as grouped on three distinct levels, that of the three souls of the ancients, animal, social and spiritual. The first one developed by the physical and sensory relations of our body with its physical surroundings, was considered as innate. The second, also innate, but of a social origin, may achieve a much more important progress because it permits the sharing of experiences with other human beings endowed with speech and creative mental faculties. The third, at the time of birth is only a potential essence, but may be developed by creative efforts to rise consciousness to clearer and purer degrees of participation in the conscious aspect of cosmic laws and causes on even higher, i.e., more universal levels, which are registered by individual consciousness in sentiments of awesome gratitude, humility, devout adoration, progressively ushering the dwindling of the sentiment of individual existence, separate from unity.

In the same way that the bodies are constituted by the patternised aggregation of various elementary organizations of primitive energies in primary patterns, human consciousness seems to be an aggregate of various primary psychological elements, capable of various degrees of perceptions and expressions. Hindus have so minutely analyzed these degrees that they distinguish 49 different modes beginning with the various phases of coenesthesy engendered by the reactions of visceral changes, through which we participate in the elementary psychosomatic activity of the biosphere. While coenesthesy makes us aware of the transformations in metabolism which powerfully influence our subconscious sentimental reactions, the elementary sensations of muscular and articular exchanges brought by movements of the body, constitute the elements of kinesthesy, our perceptions of passive or active movements of the physical body. These by renewing our surroundings infinitely multiply our contacts with the outer world.

The various sensory perceptions engender in our consciousness the representations of a world of external objects through which we have the experience of participating in the life of the biosphere. After a period of adaptation we become able to exercise on this world a modifying activity, enlarging prodigiously the field of our sentiments of liaisons, this warp and woof of our conscious beings. As soon as we become able to awaken our interest for the objects of our surroundings above the ordinary utilitarian quest of primitives, and begin to take an interest in things in themselves, and also to include other persons in the sentiment of our participation to life, we reach the level of the second soul. It enlarges the 'blunt' "I" consciousness into a "We" feeling and beyond the utilitarian appetite for things, develops a desire to understand the nature and the laws of their relations with the universe. The social and reflective soul, through its activities, rises up to the noosphere, where it gathers the elements of the ascent of its interest to the level of universal and disinterested observation, above egocentric appetites, to a realm of concerns which are completely free from personal ambitions and tending to the comprehension of the universe in which it merges itself through the absorption of all its powers of attention in their transfer to the transcendent reality. Thus is achieved, the injunction of Jesus, in answer to the question about what a man should do to be his disciple : "abnegat semet ipsum" "Let him deny himself". When this soul, through its intense quest for truth, becomes completely adapted to, or modelled with expressions of cosmic laws, it is lifted to the third world, that of the spirit, alluded to by Pascal in his famous description of the three worlds upon which man was called to function. After the world of matter which, with a prodigious insight, he called the world of motion, and the world of ideas transcendent to the previous one, 'all the movements in the world are not worth one idea', he further described the higher world of charity, the generous merging of the subject in other aspects of the universe, in universal communion 'and all the ideas in the world are not worth one expression of Charity'. Most past civilisations attributed a plurality of souls to man. Hindus described three or seven, Egyptians and Maoris up to a dozen, but generally they rested satisfied with three. Judaism described Nephesh, the passionate animal soul, Rouach, the rational and social soul and the spiritual Neshama, culminating in the Neshama Yethera, the principle of intemporal communion with the essence of the Shekina in the Messianic apotheosis prefigured by the Sabbath. Moslems likewise describe Nafs, twin brother of Nephesh, Ruh, twin of Ruach. The functions of the Neshama are fulfilled by the Qualb, the heart considered as the abode of God and of the higher love similar to Hindu Bodhi, the vehicle of illumination through loving spiritual intuition similar to the Sufi "Sirr", agent of spiritual communion.

St. Paul or St. Thomas :

Santa Teresa describing the travels of the soul on the different levels of its inner life, depicts seven castles or stations, the highest reminding of the 'funklein', the spark, the fine point of the soul in the Mediaeval Theologia Germanica. One knows how St. Paul, probably under the influence of his Greek culture gave a treble description of man : Body, Soma; Soul, Psyche and Spirit, Pneuma or Breath. One may wonder if Thomas Aquinas dividing man in two aspects only : body and soul, improved on St. Paul's description. But this is one of the theoretical problems by which we do not want to be dragged into the devious path of literal squibbles which, according to Jesus, lead to spiritual death.

Let us go back to cosmic physics to seek in our participation to the successive structures of the universe, the themes on which we could base our efforts to reach an integrating communion with the cosmos. We must bear in mind that when Einstein professed his adhesion to a Pantheistic conception of the universe, he took 'ipso facto' a stand against a personalist conception of God and in favour of the active immanence in the Universe of a directive principle regulating the development of phenomenal manifestations within the different structures whose various ensembles, from atoms to galaxies and metagalaxies, constitute the whole scale of Being.

Studying vegetable and animal physiology one discovers that according to the thought of Aristotle, 'Forms' are the only permanent elements in all beings, while the life which animates them, the intrinsic mode of energy constituting the atoms of their various tissues, hurry flickering through them according to the profound thought of Herakleitos "everything flows".

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CHAPTER IV

FROM PSYCHOLOGY TO COSMOPHYSICS

Noosphere and Soul of the World:

We are not overstretching the hypothesis of Father Teilhard de Chardin about his noosphere (which he considered as formed by the ensemble of centres of consciousness on the earth) in admitting that the consciousness of all the minute organisms whose association forms; the organs of his body, contribute to the formation of consciousness of man, somewhat after the manner of the small perceptions of Leibniz. Indeed official psychology considers coenesthesy and kinesthesy as the basis of man's conscious structure. The rapports perceived by sentiments of liaison belong to different orders. First come those perceived between the elements of the same structure whether it be an atom or a molecule, in the upkeep of the relations which preserve their unity. Then come the elementary rapports with neighbouring beings, like those whose influence directs the different kinds of cells in tissues of a wounded organism, in the healing of a cut across its various layers. This implies an overhead directive impulsion received collectively but adapted to the particular natures of the different types of their ensembles in leading the whole process, but taking into account the specificity of the cells whether the project is the healing of a limb of a tree, or an animal and whether the wounded limb is to be entirely reproduced as in some crabs or insects, or the self defence of the subject consists in the simple reunion of the sides of a gash. Although these actions bring up the problem of the intervention of higher centres of consciousness in superior organisms as in the bodies of animals; it is evident that locally, healing processes require the response of the elementary consciousness of cells which are monocellular yet, complementary in the frame of their participation in a scheme of secondary ensembles. The elementary interventions of Leucocytes in the defense of our organism against infection postulate selective or discriminating perceptions within blood plasma through the various layers of the membranes, blood vessels and capillaries. The existence of small local centres of consciousness in the various organs of the body has been so recognized that some of the healing practices of Hindu traditional medicine consist in stimulating, by suggestion these conscious or subconscious local centers in deficient organs to goad them to a better fulfilment of their functions.

As the complexity of the elements of an aggregate increases in the association of more numerous elementary organizations, the perception of relations constituting the noosphere of this microscopic universe also becomes richer and more complex. Each collective entity (and all entities are collective, beginning with the presence of the essences of the three persons of the Trimurti in all atoms) includes these two kinds of consciousness : those of the intimate relations between their inner components and those of their global relations with their neighbours in their participation in a larger external aggregate in which they are all contained. Thus we are led to perceive two directions in the organization of consciousness. The first is elementary, centripetal and individualizing. The second complex, universalizing centrifugal and reaching towards the nexus centre of external evoluting aggregates within which the individual is contained and participates in a collective becoming in which he is whirled with other elementary aggregates who share its evolving career in its corner of the globe. On the other hand, as we ponder over the evolution of the individual aggregates constantly formed by the 'elan vital' we are brought to realize the part played in their development by their chronic, or time, dimension. It establishes an evolutionary liaison between the precedent moment which prepared and brought about their present condition, and the future moment of the individual's adaptation to the determining schemes of the telefinalism described by Lecomte de Nouy. He was one of the foremost exponents of the "als ob", the "as if", of the school of naturalists thinking that "everything happens as if" the evolutions of the realms of nature were controlled by creative norms; somewhat similar to the 'constituting reason' of Lalande[1] ruling over the development of energetic structures of the material organism, while impelling also the evolution of conscious processes; either leading or drawing the progress of psychological aggregates, small or large, towards the organization of universal forms, as if deliberately chosen and prepared by a conscious power ruling over the operations of nature, sowewhat along the line of the Leibnizian optimism, which so much irked Voltaire.

Being and Becoming :

We thus come back to the old theological distinction between Being, the intemporal essence of creatures, as they are conceived by the Creator of a Cosmos, and the process of Becoming, through which the unfolding of chains of causes and effects, on the way to the achievement of Being, is actualized. Being is at the same time anterior to the evolutionary process of creatures on their way to the achievement of Being; it is already completely achieved in the Divine Creative Thought, beyond time-space, and also it is constantly and simultaneously present in all its perfection in the unfolding of the thread of its progress through the historical succession of the instants of cosmic becoming. The consecutive aspects of all ephemeral individual becomings are but scintillating sparks, intimately associated in the successive aggregates of the various syntheses through which they participate in the evolutionary becoming of the supra-dimensional cosmos. This view obviously considers the whole evolution, the successive ensembles of the instants of associated becoming, as a train of phenomenal illusions; while immutable Being, in its majestic intemporality, participates only virtually and passively in the apparent progressive Becoming, in the manner in which a railway station is inherently implied in the successive rails of the way leading to it.

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[1] André Lalande "Les raisons et les normes".

Let us remark that, although this metaphysical view is not explicitly contained in the data of modern cosmic physics, it is not absent, in the light of the prodigious transformation of great celestial bodies like solar systems or even galaxies which are known to be completed in the small span of a few millions of years, like the transformation of giant stars into dwarfs in less than twenty million years.

On a minute scale there is also the stupendous fact that during the course of electrons around the nucleus of their atom, they are only in time-space for a minor part of that course, but spend the major part of it out of space time, thus out of becoming. The contradictions in our present condition may be but fleeting appearances and are probably already joined in harmonious synthesis which may become apparent in a future, as yet beyond our grasp but, relatively near in the Chronic frame of the cosmos.

Then the experiences of cosmic consciousness of mystics could be considered either as occasional overlappings of the ordinary spatial boundaries of the organization used as its supporting individual consciousness, or as an instantaneous anticipation of the stages yet to be covered by consciousness in its rising to participation in the intemporal simultaneousness, of cosmic essences towards which the whole universe in question seems to be evolving. This participation in the simultaneous universal consciousness of Being, would explain prophetic vision... for the consciousness able to contact it for an instant.[1]

It seems that intuition of the communion of man's spiritual person with Universe and Reality may be made possible by the hypostasis of the immutable element of Being in the midst of the fleeting flow of duration of individual consciousness in opening in it, for a flicker, the immutable super consciousness of Transcendence.

Of course, it is extremely difficult to arrive at a clear perception of the different phases of the various faculties of consciousness which are in progress of development through the multitudinous aspects of cosmic becoming. We are still terribly handicapped by the anthropomorphizing habits formed by the blinding illusions fabricated by our senses, out of their fragmentary and illusory perceptions.

For each of our particular senses, its perceptions can only respond, or correspond, to a limited sector of the continuous scale of cosmic vibrations whose existence is affirmed by Science, but which is so much more extended than the small scope within the grasp of our sensory perceptions, that it can only be comprehended by rational (or intuitive) intelligence.

Think of the immense range of vibrations between the highest rate of sound perceptible to supersonic hearing of dogs and the slowest visible infra-red light waves... Moreover, we must bear in mind that, besides the fragmentary character of the perceptions of our senses, our understanding in its efforts to reach objectivity, i.e. a dispassionate clarity of vision; is also exposed to the influences of the particular slants of thought or habitual expectations developed by specialists of the various scientific disciplines. We shall see later how even very great minds can be affected by these intellectual deforming prejudices. With all these obstacles, how are we to organize our life so it may benefit from the discovery of new lights now taking place in the universe ?

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[1] See description of mystic experiences in "Confessions of a Contemporary Mystic", by J. de Marquette.

In Search of Norms :

The supreme challenge of the Sphinx of life to the wayfarers who become conscious of their intrinsic belonging to the prodigious cycles of creations at work in Universal Infinitude is : How are they to harmonize their various activities with the functional requisites of their particular degree of evolution along the successive levels of achievement of the Great All, also avoiding possible pitfalls, objective or subjective ?

More and more, religious thinkers as they construct their systems of the universe are seeking in the study of the great Book of the Works of the Divine Artist, Nature; indications and corrections which may enable them to come closer to Supreme Reality. After the great effort of Boutroux in the seventies to escape what psychologists could call the Blackmail of Science, Bergson in the nineties sought in the study of the development of living forms of organisms and modes of consciousness, the criteria which allowed him to describe his "Creative Evolution", a marvellous example of concretisation of the intuitions of transcendent presences at work behind and beyond the definite operations of consciousness.

Later Leconte de Nouy resorted to searching analyses of the variations of objective modalities of the flow of consciousness in the healing processes of wounded tissues to achieve a clearer interpretation of the relative, or contingent, regularity of a flow of time. Recently, the posthumous publication of Pere Teilhard de Chardin's works provided the spectacle of another unfoldment of systematic efforts to grasp the essential problem of religious life: How to adapt man's ultimate and most intimate purposes to the essential cosmic norms as revealed by "Science".

This appeal to the corroboration of Science with a capital S, is nowadays an absolute necessity. Moreover, it must be adapted to new standards. We are no longer at the time of Renaissance when a Pico de la Mirandola felt capable to discuss de OMNI RE SCIBILI," of all knowable things". The impressing statue of total Science has crumbled down in a quantity of particular disciplines seeking to penetrate into the mysteries of the Universe from an almost infinite variety of particular points of view. Each one provides us with a special type of approach and a specific set of qualities resulting from the particular characteristics developed by their specialized attitudes and methods of approach.

The famous claim of Claude Bernard "If I knew something completely I would know everything", is still valid, perhaps even more than when it was made; but we must be conscious of the fact that "knowing something thoroughly" means to have pursued in a particular branch of studies both chains of analytical discriminations and formulative synthesis to the transcendent centre of their object, a centre where the Infinite Creator at work in all creations has been grasped, felt or intuited in the essential purity, or unity of His creating act, emerging from the eternal silence of Omnitude, and with the whole unmanifested "fulness of the Void" the sunyata on which the greatest Buddhist initiates meditate. But with the new understanding of the particular behaviour of psychological faculties and elements, in the formation or "origination" of consciousness, we now realize the possibility that in reaching omniscience through the consummate mastery of our particular scientific disciplines, we might incur the risk, on our return from unity to the diversified universe of becoming, of finding our mental processes "saddled" with the handicap of ready formed psychological particularized and particularizing habits.

This modest essay is only an effort to draw the attention of seekers of goodwill on the necessary renewal of traditional positions which the new scientific disciplines in psychology, cosmic physics and astronomy render possible and also, request. But we must also bear in mind the relativity of all forms of judgment which is so charmingly indicated by an old Hindu fable.

Mind, Crystal Clear or Blurred ? :

Several blind men meeting an elephant for the first time try to form an idea of its nature by running their hands on its body. One, passing his hand on its vast abdominal rotundity, thinks it is a very large barrel. Another one, grasping the end of the tail, says it is a kind of paint brush, while having embraced a leg, another declares it is a pillar and a fourth one having had a finger caught by the trunk thinks it is a kind of prehensile instrument. Mutatis mutandis, changing what has to be changed, we must beware of the fact that the premises of our enquiries, the idiosyncrasies of habitual methods, endow these with particular characteristics, which like all forms, run the risk of becoming restrictive limitations. However, let us cling to the certainty that even in the researches which seek to remain as free as possible from subjectivity, these followed along the methods of so called exact sciences; each particular one, due to the human nature of its researchers, is endowed with a given coefficient of relativity, a particular tinge of restriction of the sensitive antennas opening the access to omnitude.

Following the views of Teilhard de Chardin, it is fairly easy to step over the span leading from our familiar frame of consciousness constituted by the accumulation of various immediate data of the flowing of Bergsonian inner duration of our consciousness, to the whole of the noosphere. This is the ensemble of the various consciousness on our planet, in which we saw that one could find a sort of echo of Plato's Anima Mundi, although in a particular form. But our quest must not rest here if we have any inkling of the nature of our solar system and its situation in the midst of our cosmic habitat, our milky way, itself but a fragment of our great metagalactic ensemble.

Our Father who art in Heaven. . . :

At first sight we are rather reluctant to accept the idea of the total integration of the earth in which we have our daily life, with our solar system. Of course, we know that the Sun was the origin of our Earth and that all forms of life on our planet are constantly maintained into activity, on all planes of their becoming, by their multitudinous participation in the solar radiations. From the cosmic standpoint, the Sun is really "Our Father in Heaven". But in the heart of the devotees of our personalist creeds, the sentiment of solar filiation of the Earth has to break through a great opposition of anthropomorphic and geocentric ideas and images fostered for centuries by the Holy Histories which provided westerners with the basic elements of their approach to the understanding of the World we live in and in which we have to work out our salvation. For centuries Western youth fed their subconscious upon the paintings of Catholic and Orthodox monks describing a lofty, human like, Heavenly Father on his throne in the celestial zenith surrounded by tiers upon tiers of angelic hierarchies, in magnificent attire and beautifully coloured or gild wings. Of course modern men are well aware of the inadequacy of these pictures, but while Hindu teachings warn us that the physical body is not a real body but only the "shadow bearer", sthula sharira, Christian Churches are so fierce in denouncing the dangers of the flesh and of the fleshpots—of this world that these are felt to be endowed with a formidable reality, were it only the power to ruin our heavenly prospects. Hence the great difficulty for us to realise the fundamental unity of the essence of our physical body with the fiery substance in the centre of the photosphere of the Sun. Of course, every cultured man knows that our dependence on our solar heavenly Father is such that if there was the slightest change in the relation of the Earth with it, or if our atmosphere were to lose some of the gases which shelter the surface of our earth from the effects of ultra violet rays; not only all human beings would disappear but also with them all forms of animal and plant life which make our existence on this planet possible. Yet in a complete confusion between spiritual reality and so-called material appearances we, instead of trying to understand our relationship with the creator as originating in and from a "pure spirit", we try to stuff our concepts of life above with the residues of our visual productions, i.e., our mental interpretations of the false report of our senses on the surrounding objects.

Our Sisters, the Planets :

On the other hand, the physical conditions prevailing on other satellites of the Sun are so different from those upon our Earth, that the existence of beings about which our senses could produce images similar to those they organize "a propos" of the dynamic aggregates encountered in our world, is completely impossible. Thus, it seems idle to envision with Bonnet and other palingenesists the further development on our sisterly planets of souls, considered as the sublimation of the activities of our different vehicles of consciousness on our "realistic world". These views could only be correct if we could accept once for all the traditional empirical representation of the Universe as it was formulated by primitive tribes and which provided the basis for obsolete ideas to which we mean to cling of the world, of Nature and man's place in them. But it must be admitted that the only practical merit of Biblical Cosmogony is that it is compatible with some ancient religious representations which still have a large following in the West, but cannot survive the unbiased and complete scrutiny of all angles and aspects of facts which Descartes requested from serious and honest truth seekers.

If our purpose is not restricted to the quest of props for obsolete ideas to which we mean to cling at all costs, we must seek for a conception of the mental and sentimental relations between man and the universe which modern man may deem plausible enough to provide "solid" foundation for his inner efforts to achieve a living harmony with the Universal Becoming in which we live, move and have our being. So much the better if the views we arrive at are compatible with some doctrinal teachings which many contemporaries hold more precious than Life or than Truth itself.

Deo Maxima Reverentia Debetur :

The absolute respect we owe to the Supreme exacts an all out effort to transcend all habitual representations built on inexact traditional conceptions and all the cherished images they evoke. These thoughts and sentiments may be very dear to the "Old Man' in us. But this one is only an aggregate of time-worn reflexes, at the same time conditioned and conditioning, a sort of mental cage in which we are kept prisoners, like old Cardinal Ballue. It is all the more dangerous because we are not even conscious of its existence since it provides the pattern for the production of the intimate warp and woof of our psychological structure in space-time.

Down with the old man :

It is impossible to underestimate how dangerous the "old man" of St. Paul can be for the progress of our consciousness and its ultimate liberation and salvation.

He provides the battleground for a life and death struggle between our past and our future, the amazing promises of which are slowly being realized in this second half of the XXth century. The splendid possibilities of our future development in the stupendous perspective both qualitative as well as quantitative opened by our new knowledge of the universe infinitely expanded not only in the frame of space time but in the intimation that in all directions and qualities, every thing we know is only a marginal aspect of a stupendous reality, beyond and above the scenes everywhere, and which enlarges us as we grow up to it are constantly being threatened by the wiles of the old man. With a prodigious ingenuity, he uses diabolical cunning to justify his refusal to allow our past errors and pet foibles to disappear, which would mean his death knell.

In their subconscious mind, even the finest and noblest souls are subjected to the insidious pressure of the deadly forces of darkness of the past, as they seek to retain their hold on us, by blocking the ingress avenues of clearer lights.

In his great work on Cosmic Physics (1953) Professor Dauvilliers, of the "College de France" describes the nefarious part played in the career of Henri Poincaré the great mathematical genius, by his passionate clinging to materialistic determinism. He had invented the new calculus methods which half a century later allowed Einstein to formulate his conception of relativity. Blinded by his irrational belief in the traditional determinism of his time, Poincare was reluctant to develop the consequences of his discoveries for these would have exposed the questionability of the materialistic dogma of the scientists of his time.

Scientific Sarcofagii :

In another instance, in reverse, we have recently witnessed one of these dramas of a blinding fidelity to arbitrary dogmas, a fidelity which may become deadly for the delicate tendrils of new higher spiritual views, which new enlightenment could help to germinate in the soul of man.

I had the great honour of spending several afternoons with Father Teilhard de Chardin in his studio at the headquarters of "Les Etudes", the philosophical review of the Jesuits in the Rue Monsieur in Paris. We had discussed at great length the agreements and conflicts between Hindu and Catholic views on the nature of the Soul and the possible modes of its progress or evolution. While he expressed a certain amount of interest and appreciation for the fluid intuition with which Hindus describe the evolution of minds along, or through, various planes of consciousness whose modalities are diversified to the point of seeming contradictory, and yet all implied an indescribable transcendence above all contradiction; my distinguished interlocutor was visibly reluctant to break with the rigidity of Aristotelian categories, in particular with the old fundamental principle of contradiction, which seems to be the root of the formal and logical stiffness prevailing in some Western Ecclesiastical circles. While these seem to be dangerously proud of their intellectual superiority over what they deem to be the gallivanting sentimental effusions of mystics; Hindus are surprised at the fact that some Westerners are unable to perceive that contradictions in terms can only be valid in a world restricted to the three Aristotelian dimensions of the world of space and form and have lost all their stringency in our new vision of an ontogenetic fluid universe where "everything is everywhere at the same time".

I seemed to sense in my distinguished interlocutor a sort of faint echo of the scrupules which prompted the Jesuit Father confessor of Santa Teresa de Avila to want to compel the Saint to refrain from denying the reality of the corporeal forms perceived in visions and also to coerce her disciple Saint John of the Cross in ceasing to condemn mystics who indulged in the vision of semblances of images of beings, which the Saint claimed to be inspired by the Devil, even when they assumed the likeness of Jesus or of the Holy Ghost. So much so that on taking leave of him, after our second interview, I could not refrain from telling him how much I regretted to see him so bound to Thomist Aristotelism. With a faint melancholy smile, he answered: "And yet in Roma I am reproached for the mildness of my Thomist loyalty".

While I was sorry to see him restricted by what appeared to me an unwarranted loyalty to antiquated concepts, I am afraid some of his zealous censors would have considered me as ailing under a regrettable imbecility, in the etymological sense of a lack of mental crutches, of the psychological props of endoctrination, which conveniently help vacillating intelligences across the unchartered territories of inner life.

However, my impression was to be corroborated a few years later. His posthumous work "The Human Phenomenon", clearly disclosed a trait I thought I detected in his attitude in this quest of truth, that is a set resolve to investigate the religious problems and seek for their solution, exclusively within the bounds of the "a priori" frames imposed by the doctrinal beliefs of his church.

In his book, while considering the very important step in the development of consciousness in human beings, constituted by their access to "hominization" he describes the slow progress of consciousness of pre-anthropoids who after having been led by their instinct for five million years, reached the "knowledge of their knowing, which, in a note on page 186, he tells us to be the "hominizing step" (spiritualizing). The addition of this last word between parenthesis throws a vivid light on the great gap between Teilhard de Chardin's thought and the great universal mystical tradition, which because of its various experiences, describes a difference in kind and not only of degree, between the representative processes of the aspects of the phenomenal universe which are created by our senses and provide the foundations for the development of intelligence, and high mystical experiences with their global universalizing and synthetizing modality intuitively perceiving the qualitative essences overshadowing the outer aspect of objects.

In the same book, Father Teilhard provides on pages 44 and 45 another striking proof of the sterilizing influence of his "*a priori*" position." (After having observed the infinitely minute elementary beings, we are impelled to lift up sharply our glance to the infinitely great celestial masses whose complexity bewilders us. . . We should not wander in these befogged perspectives. However fascinating, they tend to inveigle man rather than lead to him".)

Confirm or Rectify Beliefs :

This idea that while we are seeking to know the real nature of man, our research has to be protected against getting involved in the Cosmos, although the human habitat is part and parcel of it; and that, in our study we have to select exclusively methods "leading to him", which means, of course, exclusively along a path narrowly compatible with orthodox interpretation of biblical descriptions of the origin of the world, inspired by a priori belief that the purpose of creation was to prepare the frame for the hatching of man and further to provide him with surroundings appropriate to his higher ends.

It is true that, if we took for granted all that remains to be proven, there is an inner logical correspondence in the Mosaic genesis with its anthropocentric conception of the universe and the personal character of the Creator, who made Man in His image. However, we have to admit that the cosmoconception proposed by the genesis of the Thora, seems nowadays completely obsolete.

CHAPTER V

FROM COSMOPHYSICS TO PSYCHOLOGY

Our homogeneous solar system :

In order to feel justified in extending our psychosomatic conception of our Earthly Noosphere to the ensemble of the solar system, our Brahmanda, or Egg of Brahma of the Hindus, we have to include in our consideration the time element both in the structure of our earth and those of the other solar satellites, involving the whole of their past, of their present with all the various and varying rhythms of evolution, as well as the whole of their possible future.

This will allow us to become conscious under the present day appearances of the fleeting moments of the solar universe in Becoming, of the potential (i.e. mighty) intimate, presence of the "apports" which shall be contributed in the course of coming millenaries, to the fulfilment of a grandiose overall pattern through our whole solar system. In that view, present day contradictions and incompatibilities between conditions of existence on our sister planets and those obtaining now on our own, contradictions which prevent us from realizing our solidarity or rather the homogeneity of our symbiosis with our sister planets, shall disappear.

Taking into account that the span of life of heavenly bodies easily runs into billions of years (our earth, a comparatively young planet seems to be already nearly four billions of years old) we face the possibility that our consciousness may gradually ascend to a possible participation in the communion not only with the noosphere of the earth and with the consciousness of our solar ensemble, the Hindu Surya, but even with the third heaven of St. Paul which may be the seat of the consciousness of our whole galaxy. St. Paul's statement was probably an allusion to the three heavens of the Greeks: Ouranos, Cosmos and Olympos. Transferring our search of the possible nature of man's destiny from the naive images of the Garden of Eden to the new vision of the Universe with its stupendous extension now immeasurably larger than the closed and finite universe of Einstein, we have the sensation of graduating from the charming pictures on the walls of a nursery into the wide abstract vision of a real Universe for adults. This concept is greatly facilitated when we transfer our scrutiny to the whole ensemble of the galaxy.

Our Cosmic Home, The Galaxy:

And how could we refrain from doing so, now when the progress of astronomy has revealed great differences between the inter galactic space separating our own galaxy from its multitudinous sister galaxies in the midst of our great metagalactic ensemble, from the exterior cosmic space separating our immense metagalactic ensemble from other such unthinkably enormous conglomerates of universes of which our great observatories are now taking an ever increasing census. How stupendous all this is, can be faintly realized in view of the fact that by now well over two billion of suns have been discovered in our own galaxy, when Eddington thirty five years ago thought he was very audacious in fixing at one hundred million the number of solar systems in our galactic frame . . . and this one is only a mere drop in our metagalaxy, our super-galactic habitat. Modern research on the circulation of magnetic and physical streams in the inner space of our galaxy has revealed the existence between its suns and even in the space between our galaxy and its sister galaxies, of a great variety of clouds made up of all sorts of different elements. They allow dynamic, magnetic and even lithic (stone dust) exchanges playing in our galaxy the part of liaison agents, similar to the role of blood plasma in our physical body. Thus, just as we must take into account the intimate participation of our earth in the solar system, we have also to be aware of the vital importance of the multitude of connections integrating the life of our solar system in its galactic home and of the greater ensembles of the active exchanges between all the galaxies in our metagalactic ensemble. It may come as a shock to our ego to realize that the part played in our cosmic ensemble by our Egg of Brahma, among its billion brother suns, is not any more important than that of a single hair, or a red blood cell in the ensemble of our physical body with its billions of cells.

This is not very gratifying for our individual pride and for our regard for "the eminent dignity of the human person", (Comte). All the more so since our knowledge about the life of the galaxy has so grown that it now appears to be a very rich and complex universe. Fundamentally, it looks like a plateau, a mesa, of revolving millions of stars whirling round a center where a great number of them agglomerate particularly thickly like the very broad and thick hub of a wheel while the plateau becomes thinner as it spreads farther from the centre, to split as it were in tails of brilliant multitudes of stars, the whole revolving around the galactic centre in a Keplerian rotation, very much like the revolving suns of fireworks.

Beside the fundamental plateau revolving round its centre like a gramophone record, which, with its luminous frills, was considered as the whole of the galaxy fifty years ago—astronomers have now discovered the existence above the two sides of the galactic plateau, of enormous spherical agglomerations of individual stars forming clouds of stars, revolving round our galaxy in the way our sister planets (also globes of energy) circle round our sun, but on an enormously larger scale.

Thus the galactic plateau, instead of forming the bulk of the galaxy is now considered as the mere equatorial girdle of an immense perigalactic sphere. So our galaxy has lost for us the aspect of a spindle-like flattened spinning top, to graduate into a full-fledged sphere in the midst of which the gyrations of dazzling trains of stars unfurl themselves. While some stars remain in the regional cluster in which they are located, others seem to be called to other regions of the galaxy by modifications of the balance of energies, whose relations determine the exchanges of life and power between various regions of the galaxy. These characteristics rise from the new properties gradually developed by these stars in their usual surroundings. The discovery of the immense variety of possible local organisations of stellar life in the midst of galaxies, could lead us to consider these as really independent universes, inside which individually organised lives could go through complete cycles of evolution from virtual infinitude to actualized infinitude, passing through the zero of an atomic world. If these groups of cosmic units are individualized by the awakening of a centralizing consciousness, can this centralized consciousness assume the character of the local demiurge of a part of the cosmic plan of a Supreme God? Or can it be a "Deus ex machina", the independent God of an independent cluster of life organized out of the eternal unorganized primary matter?

Galaxies, fundamental units of the Cosmos :

But this is only a beginning. Since 1945 the discovery of new galaxies and the study of their manifestations has progressed at such a pace that they themselves seem to be organized in "superlative clusters of immense galaxies"; the "Great Metagalactic Ensembles" which seem to be the ultimate grouping of organized ensembles in the Universe. Two great differences are at the basis of the distinction between individual galaxies and the great metagalactic ensembles. The first is that while all the galaxies gravitate round a centre of their own, around which they drag with them all the stars which form them, and the whole of a metagalaxy also gravitate round a single centre, each one of the different great metagalactic ensembles has a centre of its own round which they gravitate independently of the other great metagalactic ensembles. and many astronomers think that the supergalactic entities instead of remaining at a constant distance from their neighbours, scatter through space, getting away from others at a terrific speed.

The second difference is that, not only are there in the midst of galaxies many magnetic streams or clouds of cosmic dust able to play the part of vehicles for the transmission of various life elements to their different parts, but the space between galaxies inside metagalaxies also abounds in varieties of clouds of energy of denser or looser structure which constitute connecting elements for the flow of life between individual galaxies, a flow which makes real units of life of the whole great metagalactic ensembles. On the contrary, the spaces between different great ensembles seem to be completely void and bereft of any faculty to transmit life nor gravitic attraction.

It seems evident that a God whose consciousness would be similar enough to ours to be accessible to our calls for help and to deliberately intervene in our minute, earthly inspired dramas, would be psychologically localized on a very inferior hypostatic plane in comparison with the spiritual consciousness of our own galaxy, itself very inferior to the Supreme Creator of all Universes of absolute Monotheism. (It is obvious that the proximity alluded to here is qualitative and not spatial since any point of space implies the potential presence of the ubiquitous, intemporal hierarchy of the whole of spiritual consciousness in the Universe). One of the most obvious consequences of the successive concatenations of the organizations of life in the cosmos, from the atoms of the small material aggregates of energy constituting the various ensembles aggregated in the metagalaxies, to the cosmic Whole; is that, according to the old principle "Extension is in inverse proportion to intensity" any concretization and individualization brings a restriction to integral participation in the whole and conversely, any enlargement of consciousness brings a blurring of the consciousness of minute details; the enlarged field of conscious response corresponding to a decrease of focus of vision. Although the great metagalactic ensembles are not connected by a centripetal gravitation "a la Newton", nor by any other known connection, except void, and each one of them, from our standpoint, seems to be a self-contained universe with all its prodigious variety, the fact that they simultaneously exist, in the literal sense "ex sistere", "to stand out of" (out of unity), enables us to consider them as forming "de facto" a transcendent collectivity whose essence is to Being like the Parabrahman of the Hindus, or perhaps on a lesser scale similar to the ensemble of the Elohim of the Thora, inside the overall Tetraktys.

Thus we face another step of our progress in world representation. With the discovery of the grouping of galaxies in the great metagalactic ensembles, each of them with its millions of galaxies within which stellar or solar systems play the part of simple cells in a gas (Lord Kelvin), revolving in the great stellar spires gyrating round the galactic heart; similarly to the way of the billions of cells constituting the various organs of a human body, we did achieve the picture of a self-complete universe gravitating round its own centre, and endowed with a relative stability of its main constituents, even though individual solar cells may migrate from one part of the galaxy to another. Now surges the existence of some sorts of supergalactic worlds seemingly constituted of other universes different from our great metagalactic association. The galaxies of these other universes even seem to be bound between themselves by organic relations, leaving open the possibility for the existence of independent universes outside of ours. The perspective while it considerably enlarges the picture of the Universe, infinitesimalises the quantitative importance of man.

Form and Consciousness—Parabrahman and Paramatman :

Thus the universe appears like an immense rising tide of particular chains of cycles progressively emerging out of the midst of growing ensembles, which it causes to spread, and in which it engenders the vital cycles of their own beings, while the larger organisms of which they are parts, also play the role of rudimentary elements in greater ensembles. Everywhere the organizations of dynamic and magnetic circuits constituting living aggregates, call for parallel developments and organizations of consciousness. Thus the progressing chains of form development are closely accompanied by the evolving of chains of growing units of consciousness. This duality of organization of ever more complex aggregates of energy and ever more inclusive but also more comprehensive units of consciousness has replaced the materialistic summing up of the Universe by Haeckel as composed of "Force and Matter" by a new syzygy : "form and Consciousness" which is closer to modern thought in spite of its Aristotelian flavour. The old "form" of Aristotle appears to be a characterization of consciousness being the intimate or inherent aspect of energy. This is by no means a new concept. As we have seen, it reminds us of the mysterious duality in the transcendent aspect of God in Hinduism; Parabrahman and Paramatman, Brahman being the Creator in expressing action, manifesting

Himself in the formation of the aggregates of living structures, while Atman is the mode of the Unique Being (Para having in Sanskrit about the same sense as in Greek, that of being qualitatively "beyond" or "above" bounds) as it becomes conscious of the normative liaisons between the successions of dynamisms, creating forms in their participation in what could be compared to the universal flow of the inner duration of the Universe in the successive actualizations of the "Eternal Present".

God in His Works :

It is already more than two thousand years since Greek thinkers underlined the incongruity of attributing to God some faculties or attitudes similar to those which men had been able to develop among the conditions prevailing in our small planet. Now we know definitely that the galactic spiral, in which our sun is only a minute speck, when itself considered in the frame of the millions of galaxies forming our metagalaxy, is but a very secondary element hardly as important as the consciousness of a human individual in our noosphere (°).

Nature makes no Jump :

However, besides this extreme case we may pragmatically admit that the ensemble of the Elan Vital from the electrons in the atoms of interstellar cosmic dust in suspense in cosmic space, up to a whole metagalactic universe, is constituted by a continuous chain of transmutations engendering metamorphoses in which inherent consciousness is a sort of sublimation of the awareness of the physical aggregates in the midst of which they are engendered. On their side Theologies tend to admit that the leading norms ruling over these two parallel developments of aggregates of matter and

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(°) See the beautiful book of our friend Doctor Gustav Stromberg, "The Soul of the Universe". A French Translation was published in Flammarion collection on Scientific Philosophy.

diversifying organizations of consciousness, are the deliberate projections of the will of the Creator of the First Cause in the cycles of the successive echelons of the Universe in Becoming.

But it produces hierarchies :

Whenever an aggregate of dynamic elements having reached a unifying organization, be it only that of a cell, and endowed with consciousness however rudimentary, joins a larger element in which it becomes only a cell, its consciousness undergoes a transformation. Its culminating peak whose constitution allowed it to function on the level of psychological participation in the life of a larger entity, superior to the level on which it was functioning as a small organic whole is, so to speak, drowned in the constituting elements of a larger consciousness like the water of a bottle emptied into an Ocean.

Jami, the Sufi, in the apocalyptic poem quoted at the end of this essay, alluded to these successive transmutations of modes of consciousness. However, at every stage of the hierarchy of beings, while evolving consciousness remains conscious on the plane of integration actually reached by the cosmic "Elan Vital" through the chain of its gradual progress in becoming, it tends to perceive more and more clearly the calls of the larger synthetising energies uniting the innumerable threads of individual becomings of the elements participating within it in the preparation of the advent of the Realm of the Father in Heaven, Whose Will must be done upon all the earths as well as in all the Heavens, until the supreme converging which shall infinitise all distinct existents in the Transcendent Unity of "Worlds without end".

The Self: from Cradle to Prison :

Yet, it is obvious that the conscious units as they progress towards an intimate awakening to a clear perception of their participation in a creative process leading to the formation of a new collective entity, only reach full consciousness on this relatively transcendent plane as far as they are able to disentangle themselves from the inveterate psychological crystallization forming the frame of their previous self. How clear become Jesus' words "He who wants to save his life shall lose it" (He who wants to cling to the present organization of his individuality is debarred from realizing his identity in a superior whole); while he who forsakes the limiting distinctions of his present soul "shall have eternal life". Having escaped from the bars of the limited and limiting self, he may join the transcendence of the superior realm.

The Instant, perpetual threshold from past to future:

Thus when we consider the image of the world described by the recent progress of Cosmic Physics and Astronomy, we come to the picture of a psycho-dynamic world, in which our life unfurls its convolutions in the guise of an immense participation in the formation of a prodigious double hierarchy of structures and of modes of consciousness formed simultaneously in time and space, and in which, according to Eddington's words: "All things are everywhere at the same time" and we might add: "in the fullness of their becoming". According to Auguste Comte's fine definition of mankind which is at the same time "Rich with the past and pregnant with its future", each conscious unit, each soul, each centre of animation of an organic structure, is at the same time rich with all the harvest of awareness and conscious realizations of the past of the Universe to which it belonged, while the ensemble of its virtualities already included the totality of the creative norms whose successive integration shall constitute the steps of their even closer assimilation, on an ever enlarging scale, in their participation to the Becoming of the Whole, in the "attenuations" of the boundaries of their individual self, to use the beautiful expression of the Sufis : "Fana", meaning, attenuation, the key to the progress of the conscious unit on the stages of the sublimation of spiritual apotheosis.

Become whom thou art :

Just as we are now capable of understanding how it may be possible for the innumerable Hertzian waves emitted by all radiostations to pass through space without interfering with one another's particular expressions, provided they have different wave lengths; we have no difficulty in conceiving the possibility for our particular modes of consciousness to be included in the higher modes of consciousness of the Great Cosmic Wholes, solar, galactic, and metagalactic. Without our being aware of them now, in the same way that adding more powerful lamps to a radio set enhances its receptivity, we may conceive the possibility for our consciousness to project antennae in the finer phases of the noosphere, antennae constituted by the accretion of the higher modes of consciousness we have been able to organize and which engender above our general consciousness, new faculties of awareness and communion, constituting source of felicities for mystics, inaccessible to mere intellectuals however analytical their intelligence.

Moreover, what we know of the relations between the Earth and the Sun allows us to imagine without much effort the participation of our earthly noosphere in the ensemble of awarenesses of ontogenetic and normative liaisons included in the frame of the possibilities of conscious co-existence with all the transcendent virtualities which are achieving their entelechia, the fulfilment of their inherent essence in the frame of our solar system. One can even conceive without much difficulty the extension of the "inclusive relations" of the soul of our solar system to that of our Galaxy and from the latter to the soul of the metagalaxy in a way similar to the hierarchy of Greek gods.

Pedantic Parrots :

However, it is evident that without the experiences we call "spiritual", through which is born in us the sentiment of our intimate participation in the self-assertion of the presence of the Causeless Cause in the midst of our becoming; all our descriptions of the sublimation of our consciousness, of its participation in the projections of Parabrahman, included in the successive levels of the dizzy normative hierarchy of the universe, would partake of the most authentic psittacism. This is the faculty of parrots, able to reproduce glibly all sorts of words bereft of any signification for them. It does not seem impossible that the supreme aspect of the Universe, on the level where the pure essences of beings would emanate from transcendence, in their falling from intemporality into the flow of the time of becoming, may more or less correspond to our very wan description. One is tempted, in so far as we are able to interpret "signs on the wall", in reversing the indications left by the tracks of the flow of becoming on the sands of the course of history, like the rivulets left on the sands of a beach after the receding of the tide, to believe that the processes we have described is fairly plausible. In some ways, it corresponds to some aspects of the Hindu-Buddhist and Pythagorean traditions. Also to the declaration made by Einstein at the end of his career : "the results of my researches and of those of my colleagues bring me to a pantheistic conception of the Universe". However, we must not lose sight of the fact that in the realm of the Sacred. any expression is a restriction, a desecration.

As we have already intimated, there is a radical antinomy between the pantheism based on the prodigiously grandiose cosmic ballet of metagalactic universes, and the adoration of little personal Gods in the image of man, or at least within the reach of human man, in the sense of Nietszche's "human too human", and such as could be conceived by men of primitive societies not yet completely emerged from the vagaries of vagrant nomads, to live in settled towns. In these, they develop the first collective psychological crucibles out of which emerge the rudiment of the racial sub-conscious described by psychoanalists.

However, one would have to be completely wanting in culture, in love and feeling for nuances, to want to consign to the scrapheap all religious forms, urging all men to rise abruptly to the rarefied atmosphere of Radical Spiritual Monism.

Who could dare to flatter himself on having so completely assimilated the precious values of the expression of the True, the Beautiful and the Good, that he is ready to drop them, without even a parting glance, to soar up to the dizzy peak of the **EKAM ADVAITAM**, the One without a Second, of Hinduism, the Mosaic proscription of any formal representation, the solemn warning of the Coran : "We created Heaven and Earth, and all that is in between; they are illusory". These warnings, repeated by the Ecclesiast, of the Pentateuch of Moses, "Omnia Vanitas", were also uttered by Christian Theologians "God is everything, in all" . . . He is the one and only reality in the whole universe. The warning of Pascal : "He who strives too much to be an angel makes a fool of himself", particularly applies in this case. The cults of the various personal gods are infinitely respectable and even precious for the average souls who begin to feel the call of the Infinite or at any rate, of one greater than they, without perceiving a response from the Transcendent. They certainly play a very important part in providing the lower step of Jacob's ladder which is to lead consciousness to the spiritual sublimities. This is clearly proven by the persisting popularity of the cults of personal gods, even in India, the land which produced so many mahatmas, great souls, metaphysical and spiritual giants. One must take into account that India had over one hundred million inhabitants for more than three thousand years, so that with the great growth of population no other known religion has been "followed" by such a large number of souls. Although the number of great Seers may be larger in Hinduism than in other religions, yet the anonymous rank and file of the Hindus in their majority, cling to the personal gods of their Trimurti.

True Oecumenism :

If we restrict our efforts to understand God in his relations with Creation, to the sole consideration of the world as it appeared to the Primitive Hebrews and as it still appears to ignorants, whose vision goes no farther than the data of the senses; the vision of the Creator we arrive at cannot justify any claim to Catholicity, that is, to Universality.

On the other hand, if we limit the scope of our consideration of the Universe to our solar system, regarded as the central element of reality in the created universe in which stars are but "luminaries" turning round the earth to bring it light during the night, our God loses any right to be considered as the One and Only origin of the whole universe, but He might be accessible to the calls or homages of men.

There is also a radical antagonism between an exclusive claim to a personal and reciprocal alliance between a man, or a people attached to a minor province of our own earth, with the One and Only Creator of all universes. The idea that the whole cosmic paraphernalia surrounding our little solar satellite is but a sort of ornamental frill around the life of a chosen people of a few hundred thousand men in a universe containing many billions of billions of solar systems, seems to be the apotheosis of the story of the tail wagging the dog. Even modern Israelites feel it necessary to radically question these conceptions. This is proven by the fact that, of all civilized countries with free elections, Israel is the one where the proportion of the electorate influenced by a loyalty to the national religion, is the smallest; hardly twenty per-cent. This is a marvellous tribute to the mental freedom and honesty of the majority of Jews whose religion based as it is on the idea of the election of their nation by God as His exclusive representative, is so flattering to their national feelings.

The overall Creator of the Universe has to be transcendent to any particular form of creation, whether a planet, a solar system, or a metagalaxy, and no people has any more claim to an exclusive personal alliance with the August Origin of the All, than any other aggregate in any part of the world. But also any connection with the Creator cannot be essentially inferior to that of any other particular cell of any aggregate whether that be solar systems in a galaxy or a galaxy in a metagalaxy. Since the Eternal, the Ancient of Days, is the only Creator, there cannot be a part of the Whole where He is not intrinsically present, qualitatively and essentially included in the living force keeping this aggregate in becoming.

Therefore, if the sum total of units of consciousness, emanating from the universal norms at work in this particular aggregate, may well be considered as the authority in control of that little "machina", the conscious unit of the world in which our consciousness "moves, lives and has its being", can very well be considered as the aspect of the creator which is nearer at hand, and in that quality becomes entitled to all forms of worship, from more or less sordid rogations, to laudations and latry.

Therefore, since the details of the creation and direction of small local universes may well be considered as ruled by lesser Deities like the Hindu Devas of Nature; in any point of the world, the trend of spiritual progress consists in developing the consciousness of the growing inclusion of our responsive and responsible participation in the life of increasingly larger aggregates of organized forms. Each of these collective associations of forms is the workshop where elements of consciousness reach to a collective self-consciousness, i.e., personality. These centralized consciousness may be considered either as being constituted by the growing inner relations in an evolving ensemble, which is an evolutionary concept, or as the elements of an ensemble of universal norms at work in the cycles of relations inside the units in question, to promote in them the achievement of the cosmic pattern which is "calling" the world of becoming to achieve being, in the fulfilment of the divine Idea, to use Plato's expression. In that sense, the consciousness resulting from the pressure of cosmic norms and patterns at work, or rather directing, the relations between the parts of aggregate may be assimilated to the Sarim of Judaism, which in Christianity became the great archangels governing the planets, corresponding somewhat to Surya, the spirit center of our solar system, the Brahmanda, or Egg of Brahma, created by the associated works of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. And in any local universe, any particular conscious unit may become aware of its inclusion not only in larger local wholes like his family, nation, continent, or even the whole of our planet, but it may be capable of going higher in the realisation of its participation in the creative impetus emanating from the transcendent origin of the Whole, ever driving the creative energies in the midst of all aggregates to higher modes of expression both in a structure or conscious responsiveness; finding in this connection very great consolations and very great urges to the improvement of their usage of the cosmic energies flowing through them.

But in preserving the possibility to worship an accessible God, with our present knowledge, we must not lose sight of the relativity of our religious representations, as well of all our other representations, of the shocking fact that they, also, belong to the world of the Letter, the deadly element of religions. The cult of a personal God seems to be still indispensable to a multitude of good people and their views have to be respected under the express condition that they must be practised in an atmosphere of Universal Love and benevolent appreciation of all other religious forms. These also help in the spiritual development of all those whom our Moslem friends would call the "People of Prayer" in an appropriate extension of their fine expression "Abl el Kitab" the "People of the Book", which they use to underline that Judaism, Christianity and Islam are jointly inspired by the acceptance of the Bible. Whatever may be their beliefs; all the men who pray, certainly belong to a great Brotherhood, united by very essential spiritual Bonds and should use this fact to become ever more conscious of the supreme importance of their common dedication.

When the Letter Killed :

History proves that a passionate attachment to religious texts considered as sacred because of their supposedly divine revelation, has driven the worshippers of most great religions to perpetrate atrocities constituting some of the most horrible pages of the history of mankind. One may wonder if Jesus did not have in mind these abominable crimes when he denounced the cult of the "Letter that killeth". The West had St. Bartholomew's Night, the "Holy" Inquisition, the wholesale massacre of Maya Indians by Pizarro in Mexico, witch hunting by Protestants in Old and New England. And these horrors were not limited to the West. If Hindus and Buddhists are practically innocent of religious persecutions, one of the most terrible instances of massacres prompted by blind religious zeal, took place in China, where in Canton, in 850 AD over 150,000 Buddhist, Moslem, and Nestorian Christians were massacred in one day by the fanatic worshippers of the old Chinese Gods, who they feared were menaced by competitors from abroad. Of course, it would be downright unfair to resort to the horrors of a blood-thirsty past to condemn present day believers of Ancient religions. Without tarrying on the horrible past, we must find in its tragedies the seeds of a very salutary humility which many of us must feel in view of the sinister past in which our ancestors participated and which must awaken in us a sense of sharing in a collective guilt together with the urge to atone for it.

So, while carefully preserving these lugubrious memories as a safeguard against any kind of collective religious pride, let us turn a new page and face the future with open minds and open hearts.

Let us dedicate all our power to become conscious of the humility and love which can be developed when beholding the lofty common tasks which are challenging human individuals in the framework of the cosmos, with its innumerable depositories edified between the Alpha and the Omega of Creation in its intemporal Oneness. In the words of Henri Poincare : "Between two Eternities of Darkness before and after; the appearance of thought shall have been but a passing flicker, but that flicker of light shall have constituted all the value of the world".

From Individual to Universe :

Indeed the perspective of the whole universe with its multitude of immense grades ever increasing in lofty magnitude and value, is apt to develop a feeling of humility with the realization of the downright insignificance of the formal appearances of all beings, from the most minute atom to the most splendid traditional gods, whose beholding was already prohibited to their most advanced disciples by Santa Teresa de Avila and Saint John of the Cross, these high peaks of mystical Christendom. This denial of any real value to all forms as well as formulations, is indeed well adapted to the moral disarmament of all kinds of fanaticisms, and prepares the fulfilment of the vision of Isaiah when swords shall be changed into plows, while wolves, tigers and lions, under the lead of a small child, shall vie with the meekest mystics in the practice of vegetarianism.

It is true that in India some of the devotees of transcendent Monotheism may consider the cults of the personal gods of anthropomorphic Trinities as opposing obstacles to the elevation of consciousness to transcendence, that is, to eternal salvation. In order to stay on the purely pragmatic approach necessary for those who are aware of the relative and provisory value of all ideas, the only valid criterion of the worth of an opinion is its power to lead to the elevation and expansion of consciousness. In the domain of forms, bodies and persons, love is the most fruitful source of the expansion of interest and perception of consciousness. Moreover, Plotin also held that love contained in itself the elements of its own sublimation. The number of men capable of finding in love for their fellow beings the occasion for the enhancement of the present degree of their noblest faculties is infinitely larger than that of advanced souls already tangent to cosmic consciousness whom Jesus was advising that in order to come to Him they should hate their father and mother.

We would not dare to pass judgment on the souls who abandon family ties to live in a monastery, but we must admit that in most cases, we would consider as a rank view of the mind, "travail du chapeau" in colloquial French, the idea that for fear our filial love might debar us from acceding to the Western replica of the Divine Mother in Hindu Theology, the Eternal Feminine of Goethe, who he says, draws us onward to the peaks of Infinitude; it would be wise and justified to uproot from our heart the least trace of our love for our Mother.

But when, like Spinoza, we really behold, even for a glimpse, the whole universe under the aspect of Eternity all these dazzling appearances disappear like the brilliant sparkles on a multitude of soap bubbles... even the possibility of a choice vanishes in the absence of any possible common measure or rather with the disappearance of one of the terms in presence...

Only souls having attained the proximity of transcendence can be subjected to ethics surpassing human nature. Even higher than the ethics of Aristotle dedicated "to the few", the peaks of Christian ethics are for the "chosen". For the latter, the alleged choice disappears with its possible object.

With the prodigious new perspective offered by recent developments in astronomy and cosmic physics, the anti-exegetic warnings of the Buddha receive a new lustre. The Sakyamuni (Sage of the Sakyas) advised his disciples to abstain from discussing all subjects above their grasp, such as the nature of God, the respective importance of the Persons of the Trimurti, the origin or end of the universe, and concentrate on freeing themselves from attachment to earthly goods whose seductions imprison the minds in the deceptive illusions of the world of conflicts and suffering. This might also help them, through the elevation of the levels of their participation to life, to obtain a clearer grasp of cosmic laws.

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CHAPTER VI

PURIFICATION FOR COMMUNION

Grow for Communion :

Being given that any man can only benefit from his experiences, in proportion to the light which his present degree of mental elevation allows him to perceive; our most important task for the present is to increase our inner stature.

Our growth must be not only quantitative, through the acquisition of new knowledge, but also qualitative, through ascetic exercises eliminating the passions fostered by evergrown habits, and developing the noble qualities of patience, humility and love, opening the soul to light, compassion and wisdom, in the expansion of the perception of our duties, which increase with our stature. This is accompanying the progression of the extent of the world we are conscious of living in.

First: do no harm :

This preliminary injunction has to be heeded by all candidates to liberation whatever the level of their moral status on their particular path.

It is Catharsis, the purgation of the practice of life, the diminution of noxious habits. Nervous centres may not directly engender spiritual progress, nor do they actively contribute to the enhancement of moral qualities, but they are capable of blurring their perceptions. We know how one's keenness of mind is impaired by alcohol, or even by an over abundant meal. Spiritual asceticism is a tremendous undertaking aiming at enabling consciousness to accede to ever higher and more expanded levels of cosmic relations, these becoming more and more subtle and freed from the liaisons governing their relations in their present milieu. All serious candidates to spiritual communion eliminate from their life all material obstacles to the exaltation of their consciousness. The most harmful of these is the taking of alcohol in any form. In the East it is banished by all candidates to Spiritual Union, in Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Also in most Christian contemplative orders. A moderate use of alcohol may not be dangerous for bodily health, but universal experience has proven that the smallest quantity of alcohol perturbs the faculty of the soul to rise above its ordinary condition. Orientals are surprised at the number of Christian ministers addicted to a regular use of alcohol containing beverages. The white race has produced very great mystics, but in proportionally very small numbers. It seems that one of the main reasons for this scarcity of mystics amongst various Christian clergies, although most of their members are very honourable and conscientious, lies in their regular use of alcohol-containing beverages. Mystical awakening is incomparably more prevalent among the Indo-Buddhist communities in which we were able to live. Not to mention the possibility of a superiority of the value of Oriental mystical methods and spiritual conceptions, which Christians would not be willing to admit, the nefarious effect of alcohol on nervous centres is a fact more readily admitted by Westerners.

Humbugs :

A strict practice of vegetarianism is also held indispensable by Hindu and Buddhist mystics after an experience of five thousand years. To begin with, for ethical reasons, any one who wants to progress on the scale of cosmic values, which is equivalent to merging ever more intimately with their sublime essences, must first of all abstain from breaking the elementary laws of morality, which is their very essence. With the

Hindu-Buddhists, even before the "Thou Shalt not kill" of the Decalogue, it begins with the prohibition of all forms of cruelty or nuisance. It is the famous law of "Ahimsa", harmlessness, innocence, according to its etymology "non nocere", to abstain from any "nuisance", to which Gandhi remained so admirably faithful, all through his struggle for India's independence. This commandment extends to the prohibition of all forms of hatred or hostile thoughts. It leads to consider the killing of animals for food when experience has proven meat not to be necessary for human food, to be a grave breach of morality; a prelude to the killing of men. Hence its absolute prohibition. That is why Gandhi with whom I was discussing this matter, once told me very emphatically : "Those who claim to be animal lovers and pacifists while regularly eating animal flesh are humbugs".

At any rate, for candidates to spiritual illumination, absolute non-nuisance is imperative. Thus, vegetarianism is the visible criterion of the first step in the struggle against the "old man", the arch enemy of spiritual growth.

Smoking does not seem to constitute a very potent obstacle on the ascending path, but certainly does not in any way contribute to it. Thus, giving it up is a very natural first step on the way to the great liberation.

We have seen that man, through the aggregation of his structural parts and through the organization of his conscious elements, participates at the same time in the operations of life in the small aggregates of organs of which he is constituted and in the upward flights of the creative forces in the cosmos on their way to produce the constitution of more highly organized ensembles on larger scales; in a universe in which each step of cosmic creation contributes to the achievement of the Great Whole in Which all the immense metagalactic ensembles are included.

This grandiose view of the growing integration of immense cosmic rhythms is very close to that of Hinduism, comparing the successions of creations of universes and of the periods of cosmic rest between them, to the breathing of Brahman who, after having exhaled a Universe, inhales it again. It is also close to the Greek theory of "Eternal return" and in a practical way to the views of Jews and Moslems on the two souls of man, of an earthly and heavenly nature, and the duty to raise man's attitude toward life from the lower to the higher.

Opening our soul:

It is obvious that the necessary preparation for the raising of our psychological aggregates to wider and better adapted degrees of communion, along the streams of cosmic becoming, corresponding to what Jaures[1] used to call the "Great Breaths", consists in a progressive liberation from petty selfish centripetal attachments. These keep a man's attention on his navel, on the puny experiences of his past constituting the core of his present being and literally imprison him in the narrow shell of his self-centredness.

Knowing our physical and psychological developments to be parallel, enables us to understand how important it is to rise our approach to life above the banal circles of our humdrum work-a-day life, to deliberately contribute to the preparation of the next step in our evolution. The path of human progress through adaptation to practical life consists in passing from the exclusive concern about our individual interest to that of the family circles, from the latter to the expanding circles of friends, of our profession, our class, our city, our country and to the whole of mankind on to the whole solar system, galaxy, etc.

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[1] The great French socialist leader.

From national cannibalism to spiritualizing patriotism :

The feeling of inclusion in an ensemble is a spiritualizing factor, as long as it expands the range of our affections and interests to the whole of our *RES PUBLICA*... It becomes sterilizing and noxious as soon as it degenerates in defensive conservatism, into a borderland spirit which easily turns into economic or geographical imperialism and bears in itself germs of international gangsterism and piracy. In order to turn it into an instrument of soul expansion, it must be sublimated into patriotism. This is love for the precious values created by the social, cultural and spiritual efforts of our ancestors, the "patres" who inhabited our "patria". We acquire it while learning our language, the crystallized psychology of our race and repository of all the values which it created through centuries. Of course, the least perspicacity brings us to expand our gratitude from our national ancestors, the patres who provided the common fund of our national cultural heirlooms, to all the great men of other nations. These great men, at the same time participated in all the cultural treasures of the world, being thus real citizens of the world, and, by expressing the precious treasures of the universal past in their own masterpieces, have made them accessible to their countrymen which they helped to also graduate into world citizenry. One could argue that the study of classical literatures mostly based on Roman history was probably one of the origins of the bellicose nationalism of the upper classes of Europe till our days "dignum et decorum est pro patria mori". Yet this condemnation of the humanities is only justified if it bears only on their Roman sources, hardly sprinkled over at the Renaissance with a thin veneer of its Greek heritage.

However, Dante, Shakespeare, Corneille, looked besides the Greco-Roman past, to seek their inspiration in Spain, Italy, Denmark, etc. . . In the XVIIIth century, Voltaire was the protagonist of British civilization while all the great minds of Europe and America absorbed the essence of French high culture and civilization. In the XIXth century, Victor Hugo and Romanticism popularised the beautiful gifts (Eucharisms) of Germanic, Scandinavian and Slav cultures. The XXth century saw the marvellous exfoliation of Oriental studies which brought the spiritual treasures of Asia within the reach of all educated people. The time is ripe for the formation of a really Oecumenic humanism, allowing all men to repeat understandingly the words of Terence "I am human and do not consider anything human as estranged from me".

Already before the progress in the techniques of communications had merged men of all the nations into fellow citizens of our small planet, the apotheosis of patriotism, expanding into the appreciation and cult of the cultural treasures produced by all civilized nations, had turned all educated men into fellow worshippers of the treasures of the Republic of "Beaux Arts and Letters". Thus a well founded Patriotism, magnificently enriched by culture, blossoms into a powerful agent for the promotion of universal love. . . Unless all the ascending currents of the new time be nipped in the bud by the maddening gyrations attracting the "many" among the young, towards the rousing and dizzy tumults of nocturnal percussion "orchestras" and mad and maddening speeding on earth, on water and in the stratosphere. . .

Who shall win: Caricature or beauty . . . communion or suicide . . . the raucous shrieks of incensed gangs or the appeal of the winged serenity of silence, whose empty spaces, Valery said, are "pregnant with golden fruits. . ."

From earthly values to cosmos :

Spiritual life, constitutes the summit of our aspirations and of our integration in the realities of the higher world, of which our practical universe is but a blurred reflection. Spiritual progress, consists in rising ever higher and expanding ever wider our approach to the transcendent Reality to whom we feel called to dedicate and to unite ourselves.

Beginning with the totemic national idol, the good old German God of the Kaiser, the God who loves the Franks, the God calling Britannia to rule over the waves of the seven seas, or the Solar Goddess Amasurata, calling the Mikado to reign over the Earth she created; we must rise to the universality of "Our Father in Heaven". Then a new step must bring us to lift our eyes up to the creator of our galaxy with its billions small suns, like our own, which are forming such a large and complex, almost self-sufficient, world of its own, with its spiritual stress and inner circulations and exchanges. Then again, we must in another strenuous effort, reach out to new sublimations to envision the ensemble of our metagalactic universe. In this our galaxy, even with all its tremendously varied throng of provinces of millions of suns associated for an immense period and participating in its two hundred and fifty million years' gyration round its centre, seems almost snugly ensconced but is really, only a small parochial group in the newly gaged immensities of space, whose crossing require millions of years for beams of light... And above the metagalactic universes, constituting our Heavenly Fatherland, and the divinely majestic spirit constituted by all the interconnections between its millions of galaxies, logic requires us to look even higher to the Absolute Transcendence of the Untemporal, anterior to Becoming and even to Being, be it that of a host of metagalactic universes. . .

For the present, when most men are still in bondage to sensory illusions, engendering the narrowest and dullest egocentrism, it may sound premature to chant hymns of praise inspired by metagalactic patriotism which after all could be the culminating aspect of a still personalized Monotheism; that is definite, and thus limited; which we are still capable to envision before our religious views dissolve into the imprecise appeal of the ineffable and unlimited Transcendent. For those who feel integrated in the laws governing the magnificent cycles of Nature and its harmonies, with its sublime beauties, to which it is so easy to attribute a supernatural origin, expanded patriotism though preserving perhaps a tinge of personality, provides an easy transition from the elementary attachment to our economic, geographic and ethnic national group to the necessary loyalty to the highest organized levels through which we consciously participate in the pulsations of the Creative Will of the Universe. One of the most efficient and practical methods of escaping from the closed circle of selfish automatism of the old man is to rise in ever more enthusiastic gratitude towards the cosmic creative forces, ever at work behind the wonders of nature which are such a source of high joys for us.

We must seek to transform this sentiment of happy gratitude into a surrendering participation in their works, completing this passive union with a deliberate will to contribute at least all our good will to the cosmic fulfilment.

However, it is important not to allow our enthusiasm to crystallize in passive or static habits which might engender our opposition to factors or activities exterior to our own becoming, which might lead to the development of a sort of parochialism in our symbiosis with factors or beings close to ours. We must always remain open to the flows which through all forms organized on the successive planes of the universe, carry on the stream of cosmic life to the formation of ever newer and larger aggregates endowed with ever broader perceptions, transcending preceding forms and awareness. This is the grandiose contribution which new lights on the structures of the cosmos are capable of bringing to the ascension of human consciousness.

One could compare the collective consciousness of solar systems to that of the Thrones of the angelology brought back by ancient Rabbis returning from Babylon; and those of the galaxies to the Dominions. Further, the multiplicity of the conscious aspects of the galaxies inside the larger units of the metagalaxy, equivalent in their system to minor demiurges in their own right, might explain the collective name of the All High: Elohim: "He, the Gods", . . . whose Heavenly Father in Hinduism is Ishvara.

Above all, one must seek to become conscious of the profound difference between the totalitarian consciousness resulting from the perception of the relations between the elements of these "wholes" belonging to great and almost homogeneous movements of cosmic evolution and also those of the ever changing rapports of individually conscious parts in a moving evolutionary stream with all its other moving constituents; and the fundamental immutable balance of Being of a Universe, which is not improving its perfection, but in the essence of which develops, or unfurls itself, the static perfection which is the end attained by the illusory movement of the apparently distinct processes of Becoming which ever reaches its total achievement in the simultaneous immutable perfect Being.

Giving up Everything for the Whole:

Above all we must resist the temptation to stop at the mere intellectual description of the universe we have sketched above; or to try to comprehend it, in the sense of absorbing it, taking it in, adding a new mental structure to all those already constructed in our mind and of which we have to get rid to merge in the unlimited intemporal. If a fundamentally new concept of the world does not create an upheaval in our life, and a radical renewal of our scale of values on the grave of our former dedications, it means that the "Temptor" (the originator of world illusions, who through our sensory reactions to them, created our psychological faculties), has succeeded in preventing us from pulling out of the crystallizing ruts of our old habitual reactions to experiences, thus stopping us from progressing on to final communion with the Transcendence of the Whole in the Self abolishing escape from the straight jacket of Evolution and Becoming.

Is there one more relay, between the metagalactic Spirit including all stellar and galactic consciousness and the "One", the "Ancient of Days" the Intemporal essence of time, Transcendent Origin of all the evolutions in the Total Universe? Are the relations between the parts constituting the Great Galactic ensembles with their own gravitic centres sufficiently knit to constitute within themselves a central unifying consciousness? Could this latter be considered as a Dominion, the highest summit of Christian Angelology? Or shall they be considered as particular universes with a Creator of their own, like the Trimurti of our small solar system in a sort of Polycosmic pluralism? All such questions very much seem to belong to the metaphysical problems which, according to the teaching of the Buddha, we might well leave on the shelves.

Two Sides to the Medal :

This is the grandiose perspective opened by cosmic physics to religious-minded men on the problems of the nature of man and of its relations with the Universe. In this majestic succession of evolving cycles in which progressing aggregates, as they increase in numbers develop into progressively more complex organisms, where their relations foster the development of ever wider perceptions of liaisons or interrelations, the "meaning and value" of human life may be either considered as being magnificent or insignificant. It is a matter of relativity, like the story of the two friends who drank beer together: after taking a sip, one of them, a pessimist, says: "My glass is half empty", while the other an optimist, declares. "My glass is still half full".

A man whose mind is closed to any other interests but those of his petty individual universe, is tempted to consider the cellular lot of a human being in the midst of our earthly noosphere, itself lost in an individual galaxy, not to mention vaster ensembles, as insignificant and pitiable. On the contrary, if a man grasps the magnificence of the infinite vital cycles whose constituting streams constantly flow through his small magnetic and psychical inner spaces, providing them with a real (though hardly conscious) participation both in all past progresses of the universal life on our planet in its ascent to hominization; in the present, in union with the innumerable vital expressions of the cosmos, and virtually, in all the future splendors towards whose achievement the universe is constantly progressing, associating man to its almost infinite progress: human life is supremely grandiose.

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CHAPTER VII

FLIGHTS TO APOTHEOSIS

Infinite Progress in Infinite Felicity:

This highly gratifying view is still enhanced by the fact that the man who grasps it, knows by experience, that his faculties of understanding and imagining, also participate in the improvement of consciousness produced by the quantitative promotion of the world of organized aggregates; this inner world, after having benefited from the amazing exfoliations of cosmic aggregates expanding successively one out of the others, until they reached the present psycho-physical stature of man, is destined to ever more enthralling perspectives, when consciousness reaching at last complete freedom from the representations of sham forms, becomes able to partake freely of the rational magnificence of the constantly expanding and exfoliating relations between the harmoniously interrelated developments of cosmic entities whose evolutions are constantly promoting and completing one another. Is this the origin of the dissatisfaction with forms, of the "seers" among new non-representative painters? These views may seem a little empty and abstract, to all those who want tangible heavenly felicities, as promised by the old personalist religions. Did the votaries of traditional picturesque descriptions of Paradises providing, with the resurrection of the flesh, all the pleasures of time-space experiences, even pause to wonder at the differences of nature and power between the different cohorts of the angelic legions, in what language they sang the praises of the Eternal Tsabaoth, what kind of satisfaction He derived from their canticles, of which He was the inspirer as well as the Creator . . . what have these tawdry delights to do with the infinite yearning and supernal urges of poets and cosmic-conscious lovers . . .

It would be cruel to insist. The traditional description of the heavenly future assigned to man by old religious texts are ludicrously puerile and adapted to primitive mentality.

On the contrary, the prodigious extension of the scale of the Universe confers an extraordinary importance to symbols of ladder of Jacob's rising and widening from grade to grade to an almost infinite altitude. We know the force of gravity pressing the soles of our feet against the ground, to be of the same nature as the power projecting our earth along its orbit round the sun, while, at the same time, forcibly maintaining the latter in the location it occupies among its neighbouring stars in our galactic world. This latter is itself carried away "en bloc" by the concerted gyrations of other galaxies in the midst of our metagalaxy in majestic cycles reminding us of the conception of the Stoics comparing the harmonious motions of the various cosmic parts to the great ballet of the chorus underlying Greek tragedies.

It is also this self-run force which maintains in their respective course all electrons in all atoms of cells of the organs forming our bodies, preserving the vital expressions of their ensemble as long as we live, as long as our present connection with the cycles of vital energies on our planet shall remain what it is now.

There are innumerable proofs of the creative and directive power of disciplined thought over the details of the unfolding of the karmic destiny in their influence upon our relations with the cycles of cosmic progress. This is a powerful encouragement to strive in obedience to the injunction of Jesus : "Become ye perfect as my Father in Heaven is perfect" to seek to perfect the psychological aggregates at our service in our effort to participate in the universal harmonies. We gave the name of Panharmony[1] to the constructive psychological activities leading to the harmonization of the work of all our faculties with the laws of their particular nature. In examining the ideas expressed in this essay, one must get rid of all forms of anthropomorphism, i.e. the temptation to follow Protagoras' advice to consider man as the measure of all things, in particular in the appreciation of cosmic facts.

In view of the place of our planet in the scale of the universe, as we now know it, it would be preposterous to take for our criterion of the value and meaning of the cosmos, the relations of a human individual with its immediate surroundings on our little planet which, in the limited scope of our solar system, is subjected to laws and conditions so different from those prevailing on its sister planets. As far as it is possible to our limited vision, human judgement of the world must be based on an intemporal or paradigmatic standpoint, that of the "Heaven of Heavens" of St. Augustine i.e. the intemporal prototype of the Whole Universe towards whose achievement the universe seems to be progressing.

The same rule, it is clear, applies to all beings, from the smallest amoeba to the largest galaxies. All things should be thought of only in their strictly noumenal aspect, namely, above space or expansion, and in true instantaneity or simultaneous duration, above the fleeting time of Creation, flowing between the Alpha and Omega of the Universe in becoming.

Cosmic hierarchy climaxing in Self Attenuation:

Our efforts to reach a clear notion of the nature of the Universe, as described by modern scientists, remain fruitless. Therefore how could we hope to rouse the fervour of masses, if we only offer them, as an object for their worship, the Ineffable Transcendence, emerging from the fulness of the metaphysical void, encompassing many systems of Einstein's Universe which is so immense that it appears infinite being several hundred thousand of light years in diameter.

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[1] Jacques de Marquette. Panharmony, from life to eternity through a rational spiritualism.

Conversely, the cosmo-conceptions on which our traditional Judeo-Christian revelation are based, are so completely at variance with scientific observations, that no modern man can find in them an incentive to the ascetic's cheerful efforts toward spiritual apotheosis, unless his mind has been so conditioned by the forcible suggestions of his youthful religious training, that it has become completely crystallized and impervious to any possibility of adaptation to facts.

Whether we like it or not, we have to go beyond the traditional limits or limitation of the World of Aristotle and Thomas d'Aquinas, wherein clear and definite forms act as so many impassable buffers for the flowing concatenations of creative causes to run against. The description of so called material objects by modern physics is in complete accord with Indo-Buddhists theories of Anitya, impermanence.

We have to become fully aware of the many-tiered cosmic realities in which we participate, and whose changing impacts on the mirror of our consciousness constitute the conscious context of our identity. For this we must free ourselves of the static conception of the Stagirite's world based on limitations and differentiations, where things are defined by their oppositions, to discover in accordance with Carnot's statement "In nature, nothing is created, nothing is lost . . . everything is transformed" in a restatement of the old Greek genius Herakleitos "Panta rei". All things flow eternally. He, thus anticipated by over two thousand years our modern discovery of a world in which, particular beings, relative and provisory, are constantly surpassing their present condition in an infinitude of expanding cycles to rise to ever richer and ever more intimate participation in ever more grandiose ensembles, fulfilling ever more sublime parts in the upkeep of universal harmonies.

Unless we be completely blinded and morally dwarfed by our overwhelming love for our puny present Self; it is impossible not to be enthused by the contemplation of this picture of the Universe, in whose frame, according to our beloved Pascal: "Man surpasses man infinitely", as he progressively becomes more capable to perceive what the Ancients used to call the Harmonies of the Spheres, becoming able to repeat feelingly the prayer which Marcus Aurelius used to address to what he conceived as the Radiant City of Jupiter, forerunner of the Heaven of Heavens of St. Augustine and a replica of the Celestial Sion of old Hebrew Prophets, and the Devaloka (World of Gods) of the Brahmins: "O City of Jupiter . . . I accept what thou bringest me, and relinquish what thou taketh back. . . ".

Infinite happiness in complete relinquishment :

As we behold this dazzling vision of the world of the Spermatic Rhizomes, the pregnant roots of universals of the Stoic philosophers, the brilliant world of the Platonic Ideas, accepted by the Greek speaking Church Fathers, this "Devanagar" city of the Gods of the Brahmins, this radiant term of the Universes in becoming, we feel irresistibly swept towards its overwhelming splendour, like the seabirds attracted to the lamp of a light house . . . unless we aspire to let go of our person, to abandon finally our self, in the serenity of the infinite flow of oncoming transfiguration. Jami the inspired Sufi Seer expressed this august felicity of liberated souls as they feel drawn into the stream of final apotheosis in Transcendence.

"Dying to the Inorganic, I developed in the state of vegetation
"Dying to the vegetable, I became an animal
"Leaving the Animal I became man.
"Why then should I fear to be diminished by death.
"The next transition through death, shall raise me

"to the dignity of Angels; Then, from the Angelic condition
"I shall soar higher and become what no man can conceive,
"then I shall unite to the Infinite, in Non-Being . . . as in
the beginning. . .

Conclusion :

After this bird's eye essay on cosmic perspectives we have to indicate the salient points of the result of over half a century of free and respectful investigations of the mysteries of the universe. In the course of it, I acquired two doctor degrees in France and in America, travelled, studied and taught in over fifty countries in five languages, engaged in social work in about twenty, and above all, had from 1902 to date, many spiritual experiences belonging to their three main classes; formal, auditory or coloured and purely qualitative, while eagerly seeking the company of advanced minds in the mystical and scientific worlds. This vast effort culminated with the giving of a course of Lowell lectures[1] at the Lowell Institute of Boston, a visitors' course in the Sorbonne[2] and a stay at Nimbal, in the ashram of Professor Ranade, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Allahabad. I gave a rather exhaustive account of my ramble through the fields of comparative philosophy and religions and lately sciences in an autobiography[3]. This essay is an attempt to lay the gist of my conclusions before the general cultured public.

It will be realized I did not attempt to express final "Truth", nor even "A Truth", but to induce the reader to expand and renew the scope of his efforts to meet life to the best of his ability. Before attempting critical synthesis, we must try to become conscious of the real nature and variety of the problems confronting us: "De quoi s'agit-il?" What is really the matter? as Marshal Foch used to say.

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[1] J. de Marquette. Introduction to Comparative Mystics, Boston, 1944.
[2] La personne dans la pensée orientale. Paris, 1950.
[3] Confessions of a Contemporary Mystic. Jacques de Marquette.

The age-long conflict in the West, between religious dogmatism and rational criticism seems to have come to an end, after a very varied course. During the ages when the cosmo-conceptions of clerics and of the lay scientists were the same, the criticism of religious dogmas was based merely on logical and ethical deductions. Already in the IV Century B.C. some Greek thinkers took exception to the lewdness of Olympian Gods whose behaviour was not even up to that required of an honourable Pater Familias of their time, while philosophers had reached the point where personal Gods had to be relegated to a subordinate position before the growing stature of the "Deus Absconditus", the "Immutable Motor of the Universe" of Aristotle. A second period opened when the progress of free observation began to bring to light discrepancies between well-established facts and religious descriptions of the world's origin and structure.

More than two thousand years ago Greek geometrists had already discovered the spheric structure of the earth, but the fact, which did not seem to be corroborated by sensory evidence, was not generally recognized.

The first great breach in unquestioning faiths was at the time of the XVIth century when after the circumnavigation of our earth which proved to be a globe, the observations of Galilee with his pendulum confirming the rotation of planets on themselves and round the sun exposed before very large circles the inauthenticity of Revelation. Then began a new period during which the progress of science, proving the structure of the universe to be radically different from the teachings of the Genesis, was met by an amazing display of ingenuity by theologians using all the wiles of sophistry to explain away all contradictions. Symbolism allowing a great leeway between a categoric statement and its realisation in space-time, gave theologians arguments which enabled them to surround dogmatic contraditions with a hazy atmosphere half way between a statement and its denial, providing a sort of no man's land where some of their exposed dogmas could claim the benefit of the doubt.

The XXth century brought this protracted contention to an end with the final liquidation of dogmatic claims based on the inauthentic inspiration of old anthropomorphic descriptions, which was acknowledged recently by Professor Leprince Ringuet, President of the Association of Catholic Intellectuals who admitted in 1962 that the interpretation of Scriptures had to be "re-evaluated". . . In fact, there were lately two successive routs of anthropomorphic personalist concepts of God and of a geocentric universe. The first came with the discovery of the fluid structure of composite atoms, replacing the belief in a static universe which was compatible with the fundamentalist world created once for all, by that of a moving becoming universe where the value of phenomena was relative to their changing participations in a changing whole. This scientific upheaval found its culminating point in the Einsteinian description of the universe as a closed ensemble whose dimensions were measurable, whose age could be gauged, while even the number of its atoms could be computed.

At first this scientific revolution seemed to inject a new life in traditional views. If matter, as composed of an eternal static mass, was a myth, materialism as a basis for atheistic attacks was also a myth. The study of atoms had proved that the course followed by electrons was not entirely predictable. This was in contradiction with strict determinism, this arch enemy of liberty which is the essence of man's ethical responsibility. This contradiction combined with the factual data of spiritual experiences of the millions of mystics in the course of history, provided the elements of a last ditch defence of traditional anthropomorphic beliefs and formulations. Of course, there must be a sharp differentiation between spiritual and ethical values whose existence is not at all linked to, or dependent from the dogmatic letter and this one which is only a fabrication of by-gone civilizations of a purely sociological origin, while spiritual values seem to originate from relations between individual consciousness and the universal flows of becoming.

Twilight of Scientific Idols:

New astronomical instruments much more powerful than those used by the forerunners of the Einsteinian era have immensely multiplied the expanse of the observable universe. More important yet, the old visual telescopes of astronomical research were replaced by the use of electronic instruments based on radar methods which introduced searchers to another, purely dynamic aspect of the universe which again completely revolutionized our cosmo-conception, relegating even that of Einstein to the scrapheap of an already bygone era. In a formidable backswing of the pendulum, scientists once more find themselves in a new universe where former conceptual values have to be entirely reformed and transformed; "revamped" to use an American slang word. I met in California both at U C L A and the "Caltech" of Pasedena, professors engaged in "atomic research" who complained about the inadequacy of language, that crystallized psychology, to express the new experiences . . . resulting from the new modes of apprehension of the great ranges of the dynamic universe in becoming, which have become accessible to men owing to the new methods enabling them to establish relations with unfamiliar aspects of the fluid dynamic reality. These remained out of the range of our limited sensory aperceptions of the pre-atomic era which was the time when our scientific vocabulary was originated under the pressure of the then existing requirements of scientists.

Under the double action of the immensity of the universe accessible to improved classical astronomic instruments and the almost indefinite extension of the range of our conceivable participation in an amazingly complex dynamic world implying the existence of many factors as yet unknown; modern men are bewildered by the evident complete inadequacy of our mental frames.

For the purpose of this essay, i.e. an entirely free, unbiased and respectful study of man's relations with a problematic, but plausible, transcendence in the universe, this disqualification of the image of the world which was developed through millenaries of groping evaluation of the data of our perceptions, annuls in the perspective of the universal interrelations of dynamic flows, and internal radar-like responsive interrelations, the value or validity of all former interpretations of our experimental life. In particular the images of the world and man's place in it, based on the Western revelation of an anthropocentric and geocentric "mansize" world, are relegated to the closet of cast-out toys from the infancy of mankind.

Yet this very incapacity of our mind to arrive at an adequate formulation of the newly discovered relations between our consciousness and the outer fluid reality, far from debarring mystical experiences, from being acceptable aspects of our inner life, brings an added validity to the claims of mystics to be contacting in their ineffable experiences, realms of the universe which are at the same time superhuman and superphysical.

The West seems to have at last reached a crossroad where on the one hand logical and geometrical Aristotelian objectivity and on the other intuitive subjectivism leading to the mystical effusions of Pascal's *esprit de finesse*, appear to be driven to transcend these differences in their perceptive and conceptual habits to blend into a sublimated aperception. We have seen how these two approaches to reality seem to resemble the complementary aspects of Parabrahman and Paramatman under which Hindus interpret the twofold passage from static transcendence of the absolute to the dynamic activation of the multitudinous cosmic becoming. It would really be more exact to compare them in Hindu psychology to the two close and complementary high aspects of consciousness of rational intelligence carried almost to the point of synthetic intuition in Maharloka; and the access to spiritual intuition in Dhyanaloka, corresponding to consciousness on the plane of Bodhi "enlightenment". Of course we use these similes only as indications of how the great problems are approached in civilizations whose codes of references are entirely different from our familiar ones. Eastern traditions insist on the necessity for aspirants to a closer adaptation to cosmic rhythm, to increase the rate of their psychological vibrations by a double process of purification of their nervous centres through ascetic catharsis, and of raising the functioning peak of their consciousness through concentration and intense aspiration, Tapas.

At any rate, as far as the average modern mind is concerned, the actual conceptions verify Taine's dictum "Perceptions are real hallucinations" in the sense that all the impressions we receive from the surrounding universe are completely formed and formulated by our empirical and automatic imagination, the faculty which turns subjective experiences into objective images of objects and scenes. Happily for us, some more subtle minds were able to rise above the clouds of imaginative vagaries fed upon our own sensory deformations, to soar to rational intelligence opening to the elite of mankind, the understanding of the laws of the universe and of the relations between their manifestations. Our access to a new world of exact knowledge brings to an end the rule of imagination in the Realm of Religion.

Imagination, the Shroud of Truth :

A nineteenth century poet sang the praises of imagination "Without which things would only be what they are". Thanks to modern epistemology we are now able to oppose to this appeal to mystifying phantasy, the profound Hindu aphorism "Mind is the great destructor of reality". This creator of deceptive illusions has to be curbed by sages in quest of the elusively subtle reality. This control of effervescent imaginations and of the passions it develops in its wake, is the very essence of Yoga as well as its definition by Patanjali in his Yoga sutras describing the Hindu methods of spiritual unfoldment in the fusion of individual consciousness in the Universal.

Before Einstein, with his profession of Pantheism, had stated his belief in the presence of an Omnipresent Creator under the veneer of all things, Jaures[1] had already expressed his belief in the ubiquity of the Creative activity of the Whole in his definition of God "Who is not a sum total but an active Infinite beyond the ken of mathematics".

In the same vein Planck, the mathematical genius who formulated quantic physics said that "While God was the starting point of the ignorant, He was the crown of the career of a Scientist". But it is not the same Deity...

For Hindu Sages, the world so beheld from our planet is but the unfurling of the glamorous veil of Ishvara, the magnificent web of coloured and fascinating illusions with which the creator of the Trimurti enrobes the plenitude of the metaphysical void, underlying Maya, above which the beautifully serene and distant smiles of the heralds of subtler worlds, the Padma Pani Buddha of Ajanta, the Angkor Buddha, the Pharaoh of the 18th dynasty at the museum of Boulaq, or the portraits by the Vinci's of Sta Ana, of the Madona and of St. John the Baptist, call us to rise in sublimation above the ruins of the "old man", this scrapheap of all psychological corpses of our deceived and dead past.

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[1] In his thesis "De la realite du monde sensiblé (Of the reality of the sensory universe).

We stand on the threshold of a new era. We know that however insignificant may appear the physical status of man, his consciousness which, through his rational intelligence, has been able to encompass the immense expanses of our dizzy cosmic universe, is also capable to intensify his subjective awareness of unity with the cosmic consciousness which has brought so many mystics to express experiences of communions with realities similar to those which are described by cosmophysics. . .

On the other hand, the judgment which the "thinking reed" of Pascal's was able to pass on the blind forces of Nature which were crushing him, is now, not necessarily a condemnation. On the contrary, the world may well call forth an admiration opening the gates to the felicities of liberating communion. Even a confirmed rationalist like Henri Poincaré expressed this view : "He who has beheld, even from afar, the splendid harmony of the laws of nature, will be better prepared to attach little importance to his petty selfish interests and shall have an ideal which he will treasure more than himself." Moreover the beautiful harmonies of the cosmos do not necessarily imply the non-existence of a Great Architect of the Universes or at any rate, of an architectonic law deliberately controlling it, to remain faithful to the rejection of all forms of anthropomorphism by the Vedantins and their absolute spiritual Monism.

Infinite Unity, Peace and Felicity :

Since the great mathematical genius, treading on the optimistic footsteps of Leibnitz, made the above statement, the immense progress of astronomy and cosmophysics brought to these harmonies of cosmic laws, an amazing wealth of confirmations and extensions. Thus the Whole becomes a sublime symphony in a sublime perfection of the successive, delicately balancing equilibriums, between all the transitory manifestations of universal life, on all planes of progressive becoming. This constitutes the spectacular triumph of the Sovereign Good (not of individual parts, but of the Whole) whose essence, transcendent to Space-Time, is also the essence of the True and the Beautiful inviting souls accessible to their beckoning, to the infinite felicities of ineffable communion, in the final sublimation of the abolition of any distinction in the infinite omnitude of absolute transcendence. The divine ANANDA of Hindu theology, in the absence of differentiating factors: the Buddhist SUNYATA.

Thus the new vision of the world as interpreted by the synthesis of rational criticism and of the sublimation of the "esprit de finesse" into intuition, crowned by the denudations of mysticism, invites man to successive elevations from the discriminative practical intelligence of the egocentric individual, to the free alterocentric objectivity of the Person, beholding the reasons and norms[1] of cosmic laws, then up to the intuitions of the radiant world of the essences of the True, the Beautiful and the Good, forming the transition between our Earthly Noosphere and the whole of our Solar "Father in the Heaven", Surya, to rise through the presence in His Essence, of the ontogenetic creative power hypostatized in our Solar World by the Galactic Genitor; Himself providing an ascending access, through the ultimate apotheosis, to the all-encompassing Metagalactic origin, the sublime gateway to Transcendence...

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[1] Cf. "La Raison et les Normes" Prof. Dr. A. Lalande.

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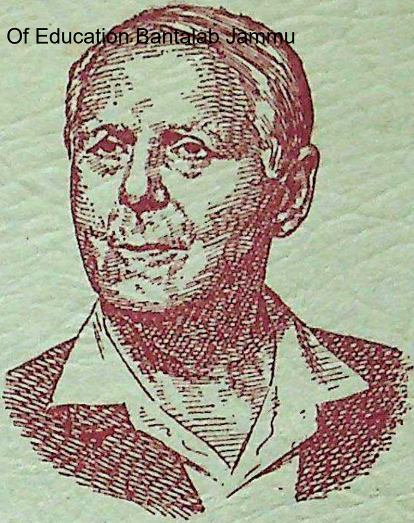

THE AUTHOR

Scholar, teacher and writer, Dr. Jacques de Marquette was born in Paris in 1888. Widely travelled, he has taught in many leading institutions and universities in America, Europe and Asia, ably expounding on subjects ranging from philosophy and metaphysics to mysticism and comparative religion.

An earnest spiritual aspirant and seeker of truth, Dr. Marquette is also devoted to the cause of peace, tolerance and harmony among men and nations. Besides organising international youth camps, he has taken a keen interest in the Boy Scout movement, too, becoming the Scout Commissioner for France when he was but 25.

Dr. Marquette has a deep and abiding interest in India, which he has visited often, and in Hinduism. He has intimately known luminaries here like Gandhiji, Gurudev Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Dr. R. D. Ranade. While copiously speaking and writing on Hinduism and Buddhism, he has also prepared instructive films on them. He is currently engaged in a lecture tour of Buddhist centres of learning in the East.

भारतीय विद्या भवन
अमृतं तु विद्या
मुंबई